



to
U.K.
via
U.S.A.

Dr. MAR APREM



To UK via USA

وَمَلِكًا لِّدِينِهِ وَدِينِ آلِهِ أَهْلَ عِلْمٍ وَفِرَاحٍ وَحَسَنَاتٍ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

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۱) انا و محمد له حلالا ما مع حد او
 ۲) قسم مني بمره واحد احصوا
 ۳) انما مع قتله لافيا هذا؛ وبعده يلا
 ۴) له هذا لا وبعده مره له هذا
 ۵) حقه من هذا وبعده له حمله

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To UK via USA

— A travelogue of a tour in Oct - Nov, 1998 —

Dr. MAR APREM

THRISSUR, INDIA
1999

To UK via USA
(English) Travelogue

Author: Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem
B.D., M.Th., S.T.M., D.Th.
Metropolitan's Palace,
Thrissur - 680 001,
Kerala, India (Phone 0487 - 420978)
E-mail : aprem@vsnl.com

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DETAILED OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1 (Pages 17 - 20)

New York & New Jersey

October 10, 1998. Kuwait Airways in New York. Five-year- visa. FNU. Family Name Unknown. Delay at the immigration in JFK airport. Geevarghese Emmatty. Qurbana at the Assyrian Church in Yonkers. Baptism of the grandchild of Ignatius Nallengara. Annie & Sunny. Thermadam family. 38 thousand Indians immigrated to the US in 1997.

CHAPTER 2 (Pages 21 - 29)

Chicago

O'hare airport. Juliet Kasha. 22nd anniversary of the Patriarchal consecration. Banquet at Hanging Gardens. Senator John Nimrod. Mar Geevarghese Cathedral. Reading gospel in modern Assyrian. German in English. Deacon Lawrence Namato and others meeting at the Patriarchate that night.

T.P. Lazar. Insulin for diabetes. George Mathew (Roy) and wife Lalu, neighbours of the Patriarchate at Morton Grove. Death of his brother. Catholicos-elect of the Indian Orthodox Syrian Church. History of the Indian Church. Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem arriving in Kerala in 1665 A.D.

SEARS Tower. Empire State building in New York. Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Walking, a good exercise, a must for good health. Diabetes. Sugar level in blood. Fenugreek seed good.

CHAPTER 3 *(Pages 30 - 39)*

FLORIDA

Friends & Relatives ticket. No big meal. Martin E Marty. James Warren. Jingle Bells. User fee. Leela and Prof Alex. Walt Disney World. Dangerous rides. Magic Kingdom. Dr. Paul Chackola & Sushila in Dade City. Chest Specialist. D.D. Sleep Therapy. MOSI and Imax Theatre. Grand Kenyon film.

Dr. Francis Chandy in Fort Lauderdale. Paul J. Ollukaran in Palm Beach. Tampa. Dr. Billy Graham's Crusade. Amartya Sen. Nobel Prize for Economics. Bharat Ratna.

Atlanta. Addison Mookan & Grace Marie. Olympic Stadium, Memorial Brick in the name of my parents Devassy & Mariam Mookan, Trichur.

Transit through Chicago's O'hare airport. Niece Asha and her husband Paul Furlow. New business of Tech Lighting. Monorail bulbs, manufactured in China and sold in Chicago. Prabha's sister-in-law Lalitha and her husband David Oomen at the airport to meet me.

CHAPTER 4 *(Pages 40 - 53)*

CALIFORNIA

24 October, San Francisco airport. Archdeacon Nenos Michael. Sunday morning at St. Joseph's Cathedral, San Jose. Mobile phone. Mother of Bishop Mar Meelis Zaya. Qurbana at San Jose. Patriarch's younger brother assisted.

Dr. Davy Emmatty. Virginia & Tony Badal at Mateca. Furat Babilla. Dr. Kiran Kuruvilla. Knanaya Church. Mar Moolekat, Abraham Mar Clemis at Chingavanam. Episcopal golden Jubilee. Mar Yosip Khananasho Metropolitan, Mar Eshai Shimun Catholicos Patriarch.

To UK via USA

H.H. Mar Khananya Dinkha IV present Catholicos Patriarch, Mar Yosip Sargis episcopa. Two bishops designate Fr. Aprem and Rev. Khamis. Patriarch Mar Adhai II, Mar Timotheus Shallitha Mar Narsai Thoma, Mar Thoma Geevarghese, Mar Thoma priest.

Joy Mulakkan, David Mannukadan. Furat Babilla. The most admired men in America, Bill Clinton. Pope John Paul II. Billy Graham. Smoking. Interpreters. Jokes. George Buttrick (Christian Century).

CHAPTER 5 (Pages 54 - 58)

ENGLAND

Friday 30th October at Heathrow airport. Dr. Simon. Dr. Sheena, Archdeacon Yonan & Fr. Esthapanose. Visit to Windsor Castle. Memorial of St. Gregorios of Parumala at the Indian Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Dr. Kallistos of Oxford. Saints in the Church. Geevarghese Mar Koorilos of Bombay.

Qurbana at St. Marys Assyrian Church in Hanwell near Ealing London. Sushila and her grand daughter, Christina. Varghese and Frankleen. Going to Rugby. Grand nephews and nieces. Dr. Andrew Palmer of school of Oriental & African Studies, London. Playing Sitar there in 1995. Syriac Class and liturgy class. Loss of umbrella. Dr. P.P. Kurian in Blackburn. Anglican Church. Black Canon. Chaplain of the Hospitals. Blackpool, Dr. Tony Panangat. Jetwing. Tourists. Britrail Classic pass. Flexipass. Dr. Joe Philips.

CHAPTER 6 (Pages 59 - 70)

THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue (MCTD) between the Assyrian Church and the Vatican. Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon. 1997 in Rome. Msgr. Duprey. Archdeacon Yonan. Bishop Bawai Soro.

Focolare Centre for Unity. Italian lady named Chiara Lubich. Headquarters Italy. Branch in England. Bishop Anton Audo. Msgr Sarhad Jammu. Archbishop Boustnos, Study on sacraments. Qurbana at St. Marys, Hanwell. Bawai Soro celebrated Adhai & Mari liturgy. Breakfast reception. Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. Cardinal Basil Hume. Cancer. Beware Pickpockets.

Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago. Metropolitan Poulose Mar Gregorios of the Orthodox Church. H.H. Catholicos Karekin I of the Armenian Church.

CHAPTER 7 (Pages 71 - 81)

COMPUTER

Assyrian Word Processor. Miltan Daniel. Milta. Bill Gates. Microsoft. Learning the computer. O.S. Mirash. Internet. www.cired.org.

CHAPTER 8 (Pages 82 - 85)

RETURN JOURNEY

9th November MCTD over. Went to Bromley. Dr. Roopa & Dr. Roshen. Taxi from Tooting to Ealing. Eshaya Chemmani. 13th November I reached Trivandrum. Customs Duty Rs. 8,600 (about \$210) for the computer. My Press Pass of SAR News.

APPENDIX (Pages 86-93)

- A. Mar Aprem's Speech for 22nd Patriarchal anniversary
- B. Patriarch's Reply (Summary)

PHOTOGRAPHS (Pages 97-104)

INTRODUCTION

I was wavering in my mind whether I should invest time in writing another travelogue or use my time in completing my second doctoral dissertation which I am now writing "A history of the Assyrian Church of the East in the 20th century." I received a letter from the Consul General of a western nation who had visited me recently. His words encouraged me to write immediately this book on my visit of October-November 1998 to the USA and U.K.

An author writes whenever he feels an urge to write. If he knows that people are interested in reading what is written. Since I am not a high-profile writer, people may not read what I write. A few lines are quoted below to state the assurance I got to write this book.

The literature you gave me (and the additional literature which I bought on Monday morning at your Church's book stall) will keep me busy for quite sometime - enough intellectual food for the approaching holiday season! Who knows: One day I may even begin to study Aramaic language. Your introduction to that language will be a suitable guide for me. I am also curious to read your diverse travelogues. Your literary output is really awe inspiring. My unlimited admiration! As a small token of my gratitude, I attach a book on Germany, which you may perhaps like. May it remind you of your various visits to my home country!

The omission of the name of the Consul General or the country he represents is deliberate. The diplomatic protocol is

not known to me. Some of my friends are afraid to talk to me during my travels. They warn their friends, "Be careful, Marjprem will mention all that in his next travelogue." Some friends say, "Please do not write about it in your book."

In 1962 when I researched in the Lambeth Palace library in London belonging to the Archbishop of Canterbury, I was told that I had to wait till 1964 to publish a letter of our Patriarch Mar Benjamin Shimun because it has some reference to the Foreign Office, London regarding the 1st World War and the stand of our Church in receiving help from the Russians and letter from the British in 1917 after the Russians withdrew from Turkey.

50 years should be over after the events in order to publish some documents. Some remarks may damage the reputation of some prominent personalities. If the 50 years rule applies to the personal letters written by the diplomatic personnel, then this letter written in 1998 will have to wait till 2048 A.D. to see the light.

There is no likelihood that either the writer of the letter or the recipient will be alive in 2048 A.D. to mention this letter. The purpose of quoting it here is to record a convincing reason compelling me to write this book.

Will this book be useful to some, is upto my readers to reason. Whatever is their judgement will influence my future attempts to write travelogues.

The last two travelogues which I wrote in 1998 namely *Hassake to Hollywood* had three trips and *Italy, Liban & Iran* had two trips. This time it is the report of a single trip. Because if I wait till I finish writing about my trip to the USA, Canada to Germany in April-May 1999 it would be very late. Some of my

readers would like to read reports rather quick. I could not write part of it during the journey as I had anticipated. If I use a notebook (that is the technical name computer users use for the lap top) during the journey I can get things written while waiting in an airport for the next connection or even up in the air.

My humble prayer is that the reading of this book will give information and inspiration to the readers, both secular and sacred. That is the reward I expect for writing this book. How many more books do I anticipate to write is a question some of my well wishers ask. Some sycophants assure me that I will write a 100. But I cannot agree with them. My calculation is an average of two books a year during the active years God may grant me. And, that too, if I do not start writing a third doctoral dissertation.

A major portion of this travelogue was completed by May 99 and it was planned to be published before I went abroad in May to participate in a seminar on the Persian Church in the Sassanid Period in the Martin Luther University at Wittenburg, Germany. But suddenly a Holy Synod was summoned to meet in Chicago in April. Hence soon after Easter and an ordination of 16 clergy and two deaconesses I had to leave India postponing the publication to two or three months. I planned to include the April-May 99 trip in this book. But it will take more time for me to get a few photographs taken in April-May trip to be included in this book.

Hence this travelogue of Oct-Nov 98 is published now, hoping another travelogue under the caption *Germany via UK & Canada* will be published before I take the next trip to Venice, Italy in Oct 99.

This travelogue has included more update data in addition to what I have personally witnessed or experienced in this trip. This will not have many copies like that Dr. Benjamin Spock (1903 - 1998), the Nobel laureate who wrote a very popular baby care book. In this seventh edition, it has sold nearly 50 million copies. I do not think that any author of our generation has such a sale of books. "Dr. Spock's Baby and child care" book may be useful in the next millennium too, perhaps as long as babies keep being born.

In the previous tour in the USA I used to cite the example of Monica, mother of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, as the mother who prayed continuously for the conversion of her son from bad life to a holy life. This time I deliberately avoided the name of Monica as I was afraid that the American audience would confuse Monica of the 4th century with her namesake of the 20th century, as her name was on TV and internet and in the daily conversation of American people.

Special mention must be made of Prof. Edmund Peters, Retired Head of the Department of English at my alma mater St. Thomas College, Trichur. I forgot the grammar he taught me 44 years ago when he was a young tutor and I was a 15-year-old student in the Intermediate course. Thus I requested him to kindly go through the typescript of this travelogue and to omit or add the definite article 'the' in appropriate places.

Prof. V.J. Papoo who was Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Cochin University of Science and Technology has taken over as the Managing editor of *Deepika* newspaper which published in Malayalam my travelogue of pilgrimage to Israel and Italy in 1985 in its Sunday supplements. The former Pro-Vice Chancellor

(Chevalier K.C. Chacko) and Vice Chancellor (Dr. K. Gopalan) of the same University had written 'Foreword's to my books previously. Chevalier K.C. Chacko wrote foreword to my book on Mar Abdisho Thondanatt (d. November 1900) and Dr. K. Gopalan wrote on my travelogue *From Bagdad to Chicaga* I express my gratitude to Prof V.J. Papoo for writing a fitting foreword to this travelogue.

The style of this travelogue is simple yielding to the comprehension of the ordinary reader. As a contrast to this simple style, the writer wishes to quote below the opening sentence of a book by Bob Perry, an American aged 46, who has been described as "terrifically terrible writer" who won the top prize of the 17th Bulmer-Lytton Fiction Contest held recently in San Francisco.

TIME, August 3, 1998. p.11

"The corpse exuded the irresistible aroma of a piquant, ancho chili glaze enticingly enhanced with a hint of fresh cilantro as it lay before him, coyly garnished by a garland of variegated radicchio and caramelized onions."

My gratitude to the Mar Narsai Publications, Trichur and to my friends abroad who made this publication possible.

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June 1999

MAR APREM

FOREWORD

‘Journeys go on and they never end. As life itself is a journey, each human being is always in close contact with this eternal process. A journey is always an experience. Experiences make a man perfect.’ “To UK via USA” by Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem is not a mere travelogue, it is his experience and he shares this to all through this book.

Many factors make this book a unique one of its kind. The simplicity of language, its presentation, etc., provide this book an air of excellence. Besides, the author’s experience in the field of writing shows his eminence as a writer, and his flawless style imparts more readability to this book. I am happy to observe that the whole book is an experience to all those who read it attentively.

Easy comprehension and simple language are the key notes of this travelogue. Mar Aprem presents things very naturally that not a feel of artificiality is found anywhere in this book. All the things that happened during his journey are there in this travelogue, though they vary in the rate of their importance. I think this is the foremost quality of this travelogue. This single reason makes the book more enjoyable. The author’s own experiences become the reader’s too. It is not an exaggeration if I say this book gave me a feeling of an actual visit to all the places the author went. My mind was travelling with him as I was reading, and inside me, I was visualising each scenic beauty he had witnessed in all those places.

‘A secular book by an ecclesiastical dignitary’...? Yes. “To UK via USA” is an apt example for this. This travelogue satisfies both the secular and the sacred. Its quality is specially commendable. It acts like a geographic map to a foreigner; there is no doubt that the reading of this book will inspire all.

Mar Aprem, a renowned scholar of the church, is constantly enriching the world of literature. His contributions, that is his 54 books, are especially commendable and they elevate him to the status of an eminent personality and scholar. I take this opportunity to thank him for his contributions to the cultural world, and may God Almighty enable him to write more and more.

(Sd/-)

V.J. PAPPOO

MG. DIRECTOR & MG. EDITOR
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NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY

On Saturday October 10, 1998 the Kuwait Airways flight landed in J.F.K. international airport in New York. As I had a one-year-visa, I was anticipating easy passage through the immigration.

Unfortunately the officer to whom I gave my passport questioned me why my passport had extra papers for visa. The US visa was in my old passport and I have now a new passport. Hence it was stringed together. My explanation was not satisfactory to him.

The Patriarch's fax allowing permission for my visit to the U.S.A. and England was shown to him. But he had never heard of the Assyrian Church. In Chicago where I landed last year perhaps the officials knew about our Church, as we have many Assyrians in and around Chicago. But in New York city we do not have any church. The only Assyrian Church we have in New York state is in Yonkers. Therefore I cannot blame the immigration official for his ignorance of the Assyrian Church.

The reason for his suspicion increased when he saw FNU written in my visa. He asked me what was FNU. I tried to help him. So I said, 'I do not know what FNU means.' Perhaps the US Consulate in Madras which issued visa to me did not know my family name. Hence they wrote FNU, which could mean Family Name Unknown. My family name is known to me, but I did not put it along with my name after the change of my name from Fr. George Mookken to Mar Aprém when I became a bishop.

Mookan is my family name, but I did not want to give importance to my family, as I belonged to all families of our Church.

I waited in another room where another immigration officer was working with his computer. I knew patience was the best formula on such occasions. I was prepared to answer all questions. But we should not answer if no questions are asked. After some time when he called my name I asked him, "Is there any problem?" He said, "No problem, you can go."

Although I have a valid visa issued by US Consulate in India, the immigration has all the right to question aliens like me. I thought if they had any doubt about the visa, they should have asked the US Consulate in Madras which issued the visa. It is not my responsibility to explain what the US Consulate wrote in the visa page of my passport. I am advised by my friends that the next time US officials ask me what is FNU, I should reply, "I do not know." They could refer the Thesaurus in their computer if that expression is in the 'memory' of their computer.

The immigration officials in the international airports should not be blamed. Because it is their duty to catch culprits and criminals. Since instant identification of the criminals is not easy, they screen and interrogate the strangers with utmost suspicion.

In 1984 when my bag was thoroughly checked at Amsterdam, my friend Fr. E.R. Hambye told me that I resemble Bindrenwala (d. 1984), the Sikh leader who was considered a dangerous man by some.

Now, another bearded leader may possibly have an identical resemblance with me. May be Osama bin Laden the dreaded Saudi millionaire terrorist who would cause nightmares to Americans.

Geevarghese Emmatty, my friend in New Jersey, was getting impatient, as most of the passengers who arrived by the Kuwait Airways flight had gone home. After spending the night in his home I went with him the next morning to Yonkers to celebrate Qurbana in the Mar Mari Assyrian Church.

Fr. Eskander Dmitri, Mr. Ivan Mirza and all other friends who received me two years ago in that church were there. The Indian members of our church also came to attend. They could understand the sermon I preached. They do not know Aramaic. Even the Assyrians do not know the liturgical Aramaic well. The Bible readings and some songs are sung in modern Assyrian.

After Qurbana I went for the baptism service of the grandchild of Mr. Ignatius L. Nallangara and Mary Emmatty. I remember when I stayed in their home in 1977, their daughter Reena was a young girl. Now 21 years later she is a proud mother. Since Reena's husband is an American, the guests were Americans and Indians. The song like *Muqabala* was heard along with English songs in the highest decibels.

That sunday afternoon I went to visit Annie, daughter of Sara Thomas, sister of my brother-in-law, Dr. N.V. George. Annie's husband Sunny and their two children were happy to see me.

Maggie and Ralph Moyalán had invited me, as it was the first time that I would be seeing their daughter Sonia. In their home I had my 4th meal, first in the church in Yonkers after Qurbana, then for the baptism reception and the third in Annie's home. My stomach unmutteringly made adjustments to receive this 4th one with the Moyalans.

On Monday 13th October 1998 I went to Valsan Thermadam's family for apple picking. Then I visited the house

of Valsan (John) and then the house of his younger brother Babu whose marriage I had solemnised in India. In the house of Babu and Annie the Trichur friends had gathered. Katherine & Tennyson, Samuel Pananchery and family, Surma Mookan and others.

On Tuesday Geevarghese Emmatty drove me to New York airport. The traffic kept me on tenterhooks. I almost missed my flight. We just made it. I decided once again that the next time I would make an early start to beat the morning traffic.

Thirty eight thousand Indians immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1997. The immigrants to the U.S.A. that year was as follows. India has the 5th place.

Countries	Number	Percentage
1. Mexico	1,46,865	18%
2. Philippines	49,117	6.2%
3. China	41,147	5.2%
4. Vietnam	38,519	4.8%
5. India	38,000	4.8%
6. Cuba	33,597	4.2%
7. Dominican Republic	27,053	3.4%
8. El Salvador	17,969	2.3%
9. Jamaica	17,840	2.2%
10. Russia	16,632	2.1%

The only other Asian country in the top 20 list is Pakistan which is in the 15th place with 12,967 people which is 1.6%. India's immigration to the U.S.A. in 1997 was 0.1% less than the 44,859 immigrants in 1996. The number in 1995 was 34,748 and in 1994 it was 34,921.

CHICAGO

At O'hare airport in Chicago I saw familiar faces. I was taken to the Patriarchate in Morton Grove where I was supposed to stay as I had stayed during the Patriarchal Council in 1996. But in 1997 as I had stayed in the house of the Assyrian teacher and song writer Juliet Kasha, she persuaded me to spend at least one day in her house.

Juliet Kasha gave me a new audio cassette of Assyrian songs she composed with a picture of the late Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun who was assassinated by Simkho Agha in 1918 A.D. The cassette is entitled *Sahdan* meaning our martyrs. Some songs in it are:-

1. Mar Benyamin Sahda
2. Mar Zaia Thuvana
3. Mar Geevarghese Sahda
4. Marth Mariam Qadishtha
5. Mar Sargis Sahda

Sahda means martyr.

Thuvana means the Blessed.

Qadishtha is the feminine form of the word *Qadisha*, saint. I was to participate in the 22nd anniversary of the Patriarchal consecration. I spoke at that function which was a dinner at the Hanging Gardens in Chicago which is the new name of a dinner

restaurant owned by an Assyrian. I had the privilege to make a short speech of 5 minutes on the occasion, which is given as an appendix at the end of this book. Bishop Aprim Khamis also spoke. The Catholicos Patriarch spoke extensively about his three-month-visit to Iran, Lebanon, England and Russia. The occasions were the consecration of a Church in Moscow and a Church in Zahle near Beirut. He met many ecumenical leaders in Lebanon. The Patriarchal oration which brought a spontaneous standing ovation has been summarised as Appendix B.

Shalem and Marcos Narsi, owners of Babylonian Bakery, make the huge anniversary cakes and present them every year. Such a gesture was appreciated and a Syriac Gospel (*evangelion*) in Aramaic was presented to them by the Patriarch during the dinner. Senator John J. Nimrod (former Senator in the State of Illinois), a well known Assyrian leader in USA and several other prominent Assyrians from various Assyrian organizations participated in this banquet. The banquet and the speeches were broadcast over the Assyrian Radio and TV programmes.

On Sunday, the 18th October, I celebrated Qurbana at Mar Geevarghese Cathedral. Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis accompanied me. As I had celebrated Qurbana in this Church in 1996 and 1997 it was my third chance to celebrate Qurbana in this Church. I practised the gospel lesson in modern Syriac and read it satisfactorily. I could see the happiness of the Assyrians as I was reading the Gospel in their language and not in the classical Aramaic in which the liturgy of Adhai and Mari is written and recited.

My sermon was in English as usual. I also used several words

their language. The distinct disadvantage in such a situation is that non-Assyrians like Indians could not completely follow what I was saying. Bishop Mar Aprim offered to interpret my speech from English to modern Assyrian. I preferred to preach freely without anybody interpreting or interrupting me. Mar Evarghese Cathedral in North Ashland Avenue is our largest church in America. There is a good choir and a well attended Sunday school. Instead of giving communion to all Sunday school students myself like the previous year, this time I accepted the offer of the vicar Rev. Shleemon to administer Communion to the children in order to save time.

Two deacons administered the chalice; as it takes more time when adults drink from the chalice themselves. In India the deacons give wine in a small spoon to save time as well as space. No re-fill is necessary in India. The deacon manages to use the smallest quantity of wine in the small spoon. I have not counted how many times the deacons approach the priest for a refill. In Iran last year one deacon answered my query as follows: "When wine is delicious the faithful drink more."

After Qurbana the deacons like David Royal looked in my direction to know what my plans were. We thought that we would sit down and have a chat over breakfast. But I was escorted to my car and driven back to the Patriarchate. I felt guilty that I did not get a chance to say 'hello' to them. I always wish that the priest or the Bishop gets some minutes after the service to talk with the worshippers who care to talk. In this busy world sometimes the worshippers run away before the clergy change their vestments and come out of the vestry, as it often happens in our churches in India.

After the banquet at the hanging gardens that night some friends such as Deacon Dadhway, Deacon Lawrence Namat Freidon, Wilson, Tina, Christina and one or two others came to the patriarchate. We had a chat and had some photographs taken. I regret that I had not had more days to spend in Chicago during this visit as I had to go to Florida and to San Jose the week in order to do Qurbana there on the following Sunday.

Fr. Boza invited me to do Qurbana in his newly built Marth Mariyam Church in Rosalle, in the suburb of Chicago consecrated on August 15, the previous year, i.e. 1997 jointly by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and Patriarch Mar Raphael BiDawid of the Chaldean Catholic Church based in Bagdad. I preferred to go to San Jose, California as I had never celebrated any holy service in that city.

Every time I go to Chicago I wish I had a few more days. There is a strong Christian community from Kerala belonging to the Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Marthoma and Pentecostal Churches. But I never get time to visit these congregations.

T.P. Lazar was my classmate in the Chaldean Syrian High School. But he attends his wife's Church rather than his mother's church. He has a valid reason. He cannot understand Assyrian. But in the Catholic Church the Qurbana is in Malayalam, our mother tongue. It is the Malayalam translation of the same liturgy, the liturgy of Adhai & Mari. This church is the equivalent to the Chaldean Church in Iraq and is known as the Syro-Malabar Church in India. They number more than three million in India. They have thousands of believers working in Germany, U.S.A. etc.

I had lunch at the house of Lazar. I get insulin for my

diabetes from them. Enough supply to keep me going. I am grateful for the love and care that family gives me. It reminded me of the family of Lazar and his sisters Martha and Mary who served Jesus while at Bethany.

The family that bought the house next to the Patriarchate in Morton Grove is from Kerala. Since I did not know their names, I could not look up their number in the telephone book. Lazar and I boldly went there and rang their door bell.

George Mathew known as Roy and his wife Lalu were happy to welcome me. They are the members of the Orthodox Syrian Church in India. He is from Trivandrum, the capital of our state, Kerala. Like most Americans they do not know who are the next door neighbours. They thought, the residents of the house next to them were some Greek bishops. I told them that it is our Patriarch's residence. They were happy to hear about our Church.

"Will you come with us to my brother's house? My elder brother died in Kerala during the visit to improve his health by ayurvedic treatment. He was to return to Chicago the next day. But his dead body is coming in the same flight in which he had booked his return to Chicago after treatment." He was about 62 years of age. His father had been buried in Chicago. His mother, brothers, his wife and children all are in Chicago. So his body is being brought to Chicago to be buried.

I went with that family to the bereaved home where there was a prayer led by the Catholicos-elect of that Church in India. I had known the Catholicos-elect Thomas Mar Timotheus Metropolitan for many years in Kerala. We talked about our Church. When I explained to him that we abstain from meat,

fish, eggs, milk etc.. during 50 days before Easter, 25 days before Christmas and 3 days during the fast of Ninavites, he said to his clergy: "Priests, their's is the real Church. It is the oldest Church in India. They observe the fasts of our fathers strictly."

Indian Orthodox Church under the Catholicos in India agrees with my observation that the Antiochene connection came to the Indian Church only in 1665 A.D. when Metropolitan Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem came to Kerala. They admit that all Christians in India before the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 A.D. were members of the Church of the East only. Some Syrian Orthodox members belonging to the Patriarchal faction do not agree with me totally. They argue that the Orthodox Church too was in existence in India before the Portuguese came to India.

SEARS Tower

When I visited Chicago in Oct. 1998, SEARS Tower had lost its fame as the tallest building in the world. It was in 1984 I stood atop the SEARS Tower. In 1966 and 1968 I had gone to the top of the Empire State Building in New York which was the tallest building at that time. The Empire State Building built in 1931 at a height of 381 meters was the tallest till 1974 when the SEARS Tower surpassed it at a height of 443 meters. Chicago lost this No. 1 honour only this year i.e., 1998 when Malaysia built Patronas, a double tower in Kuala Lumpur.

Patronas reached the highest altitude by raising a tower 735 meters high. This duplex tower has only 88 storeys. There is a bridge connecting the two buildings on its 42nd storey, at the height of 170 meters. This bridge is 58 meter long. This 750-tons-bridge was manufactured in South Korea and fixed on this huge building at such height. What an achievement of structural engineering!

The gigantic edifice was built within a short period of 5 years, begun in 1993. If this had happened in my state of Kerala, the trade union would have blocked it and injunction from civil court would have crippled its progress. Malaysia would not allow such trade union muscling.

Malaysia cannot hold on for long this signal record of having the tallest structure. Like New York and Chicago it is likely to be pushed down to the second place. The Noor Tower of Hong Kong will be ready in 1999. Now Taiwan and China are also constructing "taller than the tallest" buildings.

The latest news is that India is going to own the tallest tower in the world. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is constructing near Jabalpur, the central part of India, a tower 2,222 ft tall at a cost of 2.5 billion U.S. dollars.

During my stay in Chicago I wanted to take long walks in for exercise. But I did it only one day. My fear of catching cold in the cool weather dampened my enthusiasm.

Given below is the information which appeared in the *Indian Express*, dated 22 December 98, *Science Express* P. 6

Today, 98 per cent of the Indians do not exercise at all; less than 1 per cent exercise by virtue of their profession, while a small percentage exercise irregularly after the advice of their doctor.

Research has shown that fit people respond more calmly to stress. Five times a week, 30 minutes of low to medium intensity exercise, (aerobic exercise) can adequately maintain health.

Each mile an inactive person walks may increase his life span by 21 minutes. Physically fit individuals take less sick

time than do those not physically fit.

Now in India I walk about 3 miles every morning. So my daily walk increases 63 minutes or about one hour to my life span. So I lost 30 hours of my life span as I missed my walk during the 30 days I was abroad in this trip. In one year I get extra life for 30×12 . i.e. 360 hours or 15 days. If I walk for 24 years I can add one year to my life span. It is not one extra year we get, but it is healthy living during the 24 years I exercise.

Diabetes

India, China and the U.S.A., tops the list in the number of diabetic patients in the world. India had 19.5 million people affected by diabetes in 1995. The number will increase to 57.2 million in 2025 A.D.

Obesity, unhealthy diet and a sedentary life-style are the main causes of diabetes. It causes blindness, renal failure and cardiovascular diseases. Even those under treatment are careless about diet and exercise. By eating cakes, ice cream etc., the diabetics add to their own trouble. The friends and relatives should be taught not to offer sweets, fruits etc. to the diabetic patients. Otherwise there will be many complications. There should be health education and legislative measures to prevent the present day trend of helping the condition for the prevalence of diabetes.

When I was in Chicago I realised that the sugar level in my blood was slowly growing higher. One reason was that I could not get the bitter leaves and bitter gourds which I regularly consume in India. I did not want to increase the dose of the human insulin which I was injecting myself twice a day.

An Indian condiment commonly used in India for decreasing sugar level in the blood is FENUGREEK which is known as *Methi* in Hindi and *Uluva* in Malayalam. I got it later when I was with my sister Leela in Florida. I think it is available in all places in the USA where Indian spices are sold.

Fenugreek is very good for diabetics as well as for patients with high cholesterol. For the benefit of the readers of this book, the following information is quoted from *Herald of Health*, November 1998, P. 21

“Fenugreek or *methi* is commonly used as a household condiment throughout India for culinary and medicinal purposes. It's beneficial effect of lowering elevated serum cholesterol levels in the prevention of coronary heart disease (CHD) has been well established. Dietary fibre, particularly soluble fibre, has considerable influence on cholesterol levels. Studies showed that fenugreek reduces serum total cholesterol, LDL/VLDL cholesterol and triglyceride level which is independent for cardio vascular disease (CVD). Another important feature of these seeds is that they produce a significant reduction in LDL and VLDL fractions (Bad cholesterol) without altering HDL fraction (Good cholesterol) which could be beneficial in preventing atherosclerosis.

Fenugreek has been reported to aid in maintaining the blood glucose levels in non-insulin dependent diabetic. Total of 20-25 g. are divided in three doses; 5 g (1 tsp) at the time of breakfast and 10 g each are recommended at lunch and dinner. These doses are likely to yield maximum benefit in the control of high blood glucose and the cholesterol levels.”

FLORIDA

It was on a Friends & Relatives free ticket I travelled from Chicago to Orlando, Florida via Atlanta and back. At Chicago airport I had to wait till the last moment to see if there was a vacant seat on the first class, as it was common on such complimentary tickets. I didn't have much priority because it was not I who was on the staff of Delta Airlines but it was my brother Addison. Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis who accompanied me to the airport to see me off was getting impatient. According to the rules, I had to wait as my ticket was 'stand by.' Finally I got only a second class, my usually preferred class.

While returning I got first class as there were free seats being a week-end, a Saturday. Many Americans do not travel on Saturday morning. They do not even get up early morning on Saturdays. They do not have to work like the week days, nor do they have to go to church like Sundays. Many prefer to sleep upto 9 a.m. But I was in the airport on Saturday morning before 9 a.m. Hence I got the first class. As it was two short flights (from Orlando to Atlanta and a separate flight to Chicago) there was no big meal served during the flights. Of course there was much leg-space.

Martin E. Marty in his famous column M.E.M.O. in *The Christian Century* of February 24, 1999 deals with the upgrading in the business class, a privilege which he and his wife got for being 'the only neatly dressed couple' while travelling. He refers to James Warren, a columnist for '*Chicago Tribune*', who admitted

that he had got an upgrade from Dulles to London for singing along with some 15 others, 'Jingle Bells' at the gate on the Christmas eve. Yes, Martin E. Marty is right when he agrees with James Warren that upgrading in business class means only 'wider seat but the same food as in the economy.'

Not only in India but also in America, there is a 'user fee' for financing facilities at the airport. Some travellers do not realise it, as it is included in the air tickets. Delta Airlines had the following information printed on their ticket coupon.

NOTICE OF GOVERNMENT IMPOSED TAXES AND
USER FEES.

THE PRICE OF YOUR TICKET MAY INCLUDE TAXES
AND FEES WHICH ARE IMPOSED ON AIR
TRANSPORTATION BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.
THESE TAXES AND FEES WHICH MAY REPRESENT A
SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE COST OF AIR TRAVEL
ARE SHOWN IN THE -TAX- BOXES OF YOUR TICKET.
YOU MAY BE REQUIRED TO PAY TAXES AND FEES
NOT ALREADY COLLECTED.

PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES /PFC/ - THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORISED U.S. AIRPORTS TO
LEVY USER FEES TO FINANCE AIRPORT-RELATED
PROJECTS. APPLICABLE AIRPORT FEES UP TO \$3.00
PER AIRPORT ARE SHOWN ON YOUR TICKET BY THE
TAX CODE OF -XF-. TOTAL PFC COLLECTION MAY
NOT EXCEED \$12.00 PER PASSENGER TICKET.

In Orlando, Florida I stayed with my sister Leela and her husband Professor Alexander Alex. The major attraction of Orlando in recent years is the Walt Disney World. I had seen

Disney Land in California in 1977 with my brother and his family. But I had never been to the Disney World of Florida.

Walking through the whole area is a tedious exercise. Therefore there are buses and trains inside the Disney World. There are different sections such as Magic Kingdom, Disney MGM Studios, Epcot etc. I chose Magic Kingdom. The entrance fee was about 42 dollars, close to Rs. 1,700. If one does not carry cash he can pay by American Express, Travellers cheques, Master Card, Visa, and the Disney Credit Card. The following information may be useful to my readers. Hence copied below.

PACKAGE PICK-UP/SHIPPING - On Main street, U.S.A., between the Car Barn and the Emporium. Purchases delivered may be picked up as you exit the Park or delivered to your Walt Disney World Resort hotel. This free service is offered from 12 noon until Park closing. Ask about shipping your purchases to your home. We feature FedEx as the official Express Delivery Service of Walt Disney World Resort.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS - We work hard to offer a comfortable, safe, and enjoyable experience for all our guests. Please assist by showing common courtesy to fellow Park guests. Please be respectful of others. Do not use Profanity or engage in unsafe, illegal or offensive behaviour. Please abide by all safety warnings and notices. Proper attire-including shoes and shirts must be worn at all times.

TRAVEL TIPS - The AAA Hospitality Desk, located on Main Street, U.S.A., provides AAA service, including hotel reservations. Complimentary towing is provided during Park hours. Presented by AAA.

WHEELCHAIRS - Limited quantities available for rent for guests with disabilities at the Stroller Shop inside the Park entrance. See Legend on reverse side for an explanation of symbols used in this guidemap. Also, ask for the Guidebook for Guests with Disabilities at City Hall.

SMOKING - Smoking is prohibited in any building, dining area. Please refrain from drinking or eating in any attraction or waiting area. Thank you.

There are many rides included in the entrance ticket. Some of those I joined were Boat ride, Skyland, Med Tea Party. I did not take the risk of going more daring and dangerous rides.

I had to speed up the tour of Magic Kingdom as my brother-in-law had to drive me a distance of 60 or 70 miles to stay with Dr. Lonappan Chackola living near Dade City. He is now known as Dr. Paul Chackola, not that he wanted to disguise himself but his name Lonappan cannot be properly pronounced by Americans. Some Indians effect such changes to their names while they go to U.S.A. or U.K.

During my previous visits I had thought of visiting Dr. Chackola. His home was just behind Abi Villa, my family home at Trichur where I grew up. I had solemnised his marriage and the marriage of his daughter nearly a quarter century later. His wife Sushila is also my neighbour in Trichur.

The next day, that was Friday October 23, 1998, we visited his dispensary or doctor's office. I do not know what is the exact word to describe it. As I have never been hospitalized, I am not familiar with these words. I was surprised when I saw his name board as a Chest specialist. There was some information about chest related diseases. "Are you not a dermatologist?" I queried.

He said that in India he was. "After coming to the U.S.A. I had to practice and specialise in this new field."

Several years ago when I noticed D.D. printed in his name card, I asked "Why do you use D.D.? You are not a Doctor of Divinity. Why do you encroach into my domain." He replied that his D.D. didn't mean Doctor of Divinity. In his medical circles in India D.D. meant only Diploma in Dermatology.

In his new field he also does 'sleep therapy.' I asked what 'sleep therapy' meant. Do you help a patient to decrease or increase the duration of his sleep? I mused that if he could decrease the duration of my sleep I could write one more book. Anyhow I had no time to stay with him. He says that he has to monitor the sleep pattern of the patient in order to prescribe treatment.

Since there was nothing to see around Dade City he took us to Tampa which was the nearest big city. He took us to MOSI where there was an IMAX theatre which gives a maximum image in multi dimension. We saw Grand Canyon and the next one was to be on Mount Everest. Being an Indian I was interested in it, but constraints of time made me drop the idea.

The ticket stub was given to me when we entered the IMAX theatre. It was written on it, "Bring this ticket stub on your next visit to MOSI and get \$2.00 off combo ticket. Also good for \$5.00 off any membership package. Not valid with any other offer." I still keep it in India, realising that I will not be able to save \$2, as it will cost nearly \$2000 to go to Tampa from Trichur where I live.

From Orlando I had telephoned Dr. Francis Chandy in Fort Lauderdale. His marriage too was solemnised by me many

years ago in Trichur. I didn't have the time to visit him, as his place was about 250 miles from Orlando. I had to return to Chicago and proceed to San Francisco on Saturday itself, as I had promised to do Holy Qurbana on Sunday morning at San Jose near San Francisco.

Paul J. Ollukaran is a computer engineer. His marriage too was solemnised by me. I had baptised his baby in Boston in 1995. Later he has moved to Palm Beach in Florida. If I had learned to fly a helicopter, I could have tried to visit all our Indian Church members as they were scattered all over the USA. Why do I think of helicopter? I do not know to drive even a mini car or ride a small motor cycle.

Thus my visit to Orlando, Dade City and Tampa was over in two days. Dr. Billy Graham was holding his crusade in Tampa and the newspaper said that perhaps it could be his last public crusade in that area as the 80-year-old evangelist has been suffering from Parkinson's disease. When I presided over his mass crusade of 95,000 people at Nehru Stadium in Madras in November 1977 he told me that he was pleased to meet me because his wife Ruth Graham was born in China as the daughter of an American missionary in China. He was aware of the history that the Assyrian Church was the first Church to evangelise China when Alopen went there in 635 A.D.

Amartya Sen

When I was in the U.S.A., the Nobel Prizes were announced in October as usual. The prize for Economics went to an Indian, Amartya Sen. I was delighted. Because Nobel Prizes go very rarely to Indians. This news was welcomed by many Indians.

Prof. Alexander V. Alex, husband of my elder sister Leela told me that he had known Amartya Sen in Delhi School of Economics in 1960. They are of the same age. (completed 65 some months ago). Professor Alex retired after serving as Professor of Economics for several years in Michigan and Ohio states. But Professor Amartya Sen was teaching in Harvard University (home for many Nobel laureates). It was only a few months ago in 1998 Sen was appointed as Master of the Trinity College in Cambridge University in England.

Amartya Sen had contact with Nobel Prize laureate, another Bengalee, Rabindranath Tagore, the only Indian who had bagged Nobel Prize in the field of literature. Tagore established the famous Shanti Niketan. It was there Amartya was born in 1933. It was Tagore himself who named the baby Amartya.

India was jubilant that an Indian got Nobel Prize for Economics. American newspapers reported him as an American. Because Sen is an American citizen and he has a white wife. England too should be proud because he is now working in Cambridge. He is the first (not the last, I hope) Asian to be Master of the Trinity College in Cambridge. He is also a product of the London School of Economics. K.R. Narayanan, the President of India, also studied there at a time when the fame of Prof. Harold Laski had dominated intellectual domain.

Nearly 40 million rupees (close to one million U.S. dollars) the total prize money was given by Sen for setting up a trust for the education of children in India and Bangladesh which was a part of the British Bengal till August 1947.

Many people found it difficult to spell the name of this nobel laureate. A reporter tried successfully to spell the second

part of his name, as the first part was more difficult. The second part "SEN" was spelt as

'S' for somebody

'E' for everybody

'N' for nobody

The Indian government has proudly acknowledged his achievement by bestowing on him several privileges. He can travel without ticket in the railways as well as in Indian Airlines and Air India flights. The highest civilian honour known as *Bharata Ratna* was conferred on him. He is the third nobel laureate to get Bharat Ratna, after C.V. Raman and Mother Teresa. He is the 6th Indian to receive Nobel Prize. He is the 6th person to be given Bharat Ratna.

Atlanta

I flew from Orlando to Atlanta. My brother Addison Mookken and his daughter Grace Marie were waiting at the airport. I had a brief halt before catching the next flight. I was thinking of staying at the airport itself. But my brother suggested that he should drive me to the centennial Olympic Park.

The attraction at the Olympic Park was the brick where the names of our parents were inscribed. For the maintenance of the Olympic Park the committee had a novel idea. Anybody could donate a fixed amount of money to have the names of their dear ones inscribed on a small brick of two foot by two foot.

Thousands of such memorial bricks of light or dark colour are laid in each section and there were many sections. Our section was numbered 140. More than a million dollars must have been collected from the donors of these bricks.

I did not like the idea of the visitors walking over the names of their parents. I would have suggested to lay these bricks on the walls. But the authorities would have to construct several tall walls in this area to write all these names. It is definitely cheaper to lay them on the ground.

Computers told us the exact location of the brick of our parents. Addison had some vague idea of the location. But Grace Marie used the 'locators' and pressed the buttons and got a print-out of the exact location. No. 140. Colour: light. We stood near the brick where it is written Devasey, Marium, in one line and MOOKEN, TRICHUR in the second line. The bricks are small so that one cannot engrave more than a few words.

My late parents neither visited Atlanta nor did they see any Olympic game. But the visitors to that Olympic Park may read their names. My father Devasey Mookken died in November 1978 and my mother Marium (Mrs. J.D. Mookken) died on 27 December 1997.

Transit through Chicago

When I was passing through the airport in Chicago on my way to San Francisco on 24th October, my niece Asha and her husband Paul Furlow came to see me. As everybody is busy these days it is not easy for me to meet my relatives in a leisurely manner on such trips. So I arranged this in such a way that I could talk to them while in transit. The usual Chicago road traffic delayed them on that Saturday afternoon. Still I was happy to talk to them for about half an hour.

Paul Furlow, an M.A. and an MBA from the famous Stanford University, California, gave up his job and started

business along with his friend. The company is called Tech Lighting. The brochure was given to me by Paul. It explains:

“Tech Lighting’s MonoRail system offers all the function of a track lighting system without sacrificing form. The MonoRail itself is sleek, elegant, and hand-bendable, allowing you to custom create the ideal shape for your installation. Add a stroke of brilliance: MonoRail is now available in nine colours.

A transformer powers the system, converting standard voltage to an energy-efficient safe-to-the touch 12 or 24 volts. New two-circuit, three conductor switchable, stacked circuits on a single run. Switch ambient and task lighting separately, for example, or invent different lighting schemes to change the room’s atmosphere. Or use the additional circuit simply to add more lights: up to 1200 watts on a 12 volt system, 2400 watts on a 24 volt system. Dimmable halogen lamps provide focused and ambient lighting to enhance any interior space, and offer a long life and superior colour rendition.”

He has to spend some days in China in order to manufacture these lights. He sells them in Chicago. When one learns business earning an MBA degree, he prefers to do business and earn profit for himself and not to help somebody to be rich.

My youngest sister Prabha’s sister-in-law Lalitha and her husband David Oomen (Achankunju) have been living in Chicago for many years. They used to attend my Qurbana and I visited their home for dinner during my previous visits. We could not find time to meet each other during this trip. So they too rushed to O’hare airport to meet me.

CALIFORNIA

On Saturday 24 October 1998 I reached San Francisco airport. Archdeacon Nenos Michael was there to receive me. We had met in 1997 at the Holy Synod in Chicago as well as during my 3-hour visit to his parish in San Francisco in 1996 while returning from Chicago after the Patriarchal Council.

The archdeacon drove me the next morning from San Francisco to San Jose. The priest of San Jose was in Sweden. Therefore Archdeacon decided to assist me at the Qurbana at St. Joseph's Cathedral in San Jose. It was my first opportunity to be there.

While driving to the Cathedral he dialled on his Mobile Phone the mother of Bishop Mar Meelis Zaya of Australia to tell her I was doing Qurbana in her city and I would like to greet her. Unfortunately she had gone to her daughter in another part of California. I missed the chance. But two days later I visited her home.

"Mar Abimalek Timotheus was my uncle", said Mrs. Zaya, mother of Bishop Mar Meelis. I told her that I had met the late Elishwa, niece of Mar Timotheus. She said that she did not know the exact relationship. Then I ventured to explain the ramifications of her genealogical table. I said Elishwa was married to Mr. Zaya, brother of late Patriarch Mar Benyamin (martyred in 1918) and late Patriarch Mar Poulose Shimun (died young in 1920), and Rab Khaila David d Mar Shimun (father of late Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun murdered on 6 November, 1975)

and of the well known Assyrian lady Surma. I further told that Elishwa gave me tea and showed me the name of Nadakavkaran Ittymathew engraved on the silver cup where sugar was placed. Elishwa had told me that that silver cup was presented to her father Shamasha Skharia, brother of Mar Timotheus, when he had visited Trichur in the 1920s. I also told her that another deacon Joseph Kellaitha, a cousin of Mar Timotheus spent nearly two years in Trichur making font for the Syriac types to be used to print books in Mousul, Iraq in 1924 for the Assyrian Press he later founded in Mousul.

“How old were you at that time, Mar Aprem?” We burst into laughter when I replied that I was not born at that time. I had noticed some bewilderment on the faces of Bishop’s brother and mother, as I was narrating the incidents of the early decades of the present century. My beard did not look as white as snow as that of Aaron, the brother of Moses.

But I was not merely dropping names to create an impression. As a student of the history of our Church I knew the important events about the Assyrians, although I was not born even when the mother of Bishop Mar Meelis was born. But I knew quite a lot about late Mar Abimalek Timotheus as I had written his biography. I was delighted (an author’s pardonable pride) to hear that my hostess had read the biography I had written, perhaps Assyrian translation made by the late Deacon Geevarghese Benyamin of Chicago.

On Sunday, the 25th October during the Holy Qurbana at St. Joseph’s Cathedral in San Jose, the younger brother of His Holiness Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV assisted me, holding the *pielasa* (platen) for me while I distributed the Holy Bread to the

communicants. His father is also a deacon like him. But owing to his old age the nonagenarian father of the Patriarch was not present in the Church.

Dr. Davy Emmatty M.Sc., Ph.D. and his wife Gracy live at Stockton, a distance of about two hours from San Jose. Archdeacon offered to drive me to his niece Mrs. Verginia Badal in Manteca from where it would be closer for Davy to pick me up. Since the archdeacon had a mobile phone we took off from the church, hoping that I would be able to contact my host during the drive. Since my host had a car phone I was over-confident that I would be able to contact him even if he was driving his car. Even the modern gadgets have their limitations. Dr. Davy didn't plug his car phone. When he returned home he didn't bother to check whether there was any message on the phone at home.

Virginia and Tony Badal told me that I could take rest in their home till my friend contacted me. As he was not calling me I was getting embarrassed. There was no telephone call. I was not totally upset because I was waiting in the comfortable Assyrian house and not on the platform of some railway station or bus stop to be picked up.

That delay was not a tragedy. It was a divine comedy. As there was nothing to do while waiting, my conversation turned to computers. Tony Badal telephoned to his friend Furat Babilla who promised to present me a computer within three days. Nobody knows how mysterious are divine interventions.

The next morning the expected telephone call came. My friend got my message and telephoned in different area codes as he thought I had forgotten to give the area code when I gave

the telephone number of the Badal home where I was staying. In fact I thought that I was smart not mentioning the area code, because Manteca and Stockton had the same area code. By trial and error he tried without dialling my area code. There I was, fresh and awake, after the sound sleep of a good night.

Hospitality is always warm and good food is a must. One of the reasons for his absence from home the previous afternoon was that he had gone to Sacramento to buy fish for me. As I had given up eating meat since 1968 after my consecration as bishop in Bagdad, Dr. Davy saw to it that he gave me too much fish. Since I knew that he had taken trouble to buy fish for me I decided to 'oblige.'

When I explained that I eat very little and I may develop stomach ache, he gave me some tablets to chew to digest the extra food I was expected to consume. It was after many years I was chewing some sort of digestive medicine to keep me healthy. My advise to my readers is to eschew the chewing of digestive pills. It is always healthier if there is some empty place in your stomach. I thank the fathers of our Church who prescribed seasons of fasting and abstinence to keep both our body and soul healthy.

Dr. Kiran Kuruvilla who worked in the Mar Timotheus Hospital in Trichur as an obligation in return for the sponsorship privilege given by me for the M.B.B.S. Degree course in the famous Christian Medical College, Vellore, South India had joined his parents. Mr. Zacharia Kuruvilla took an early retirement from Indian Air Force and has been working for the United Airlines in San Francisco. Dr. Kiran and his parents were particular that I should stay with them while in that area.

It was a nice drive from Dr. Davy's home to the Kuruvillas. Kiran's mother is the sister of my old friend Very Rev. Dr. Abraham Thomas Vazhayil Corepiscopa of Boston. One of their many sisters is a Reverend sister in the Knanaya Syrian Orthodox Church. They believe that their forefathers migrated from "Syria" (which means Iraq), from a town called Kinai near Bagdad in 345 A.D. The Knanaya Christians in Kerala are equally divided into Catholic and Orthodox Congregations, each about 1,50,000 strong in number. The Catholic Knanaite got an assistant bishop Mar Moolekat (consecrated by the Pope himself) to assist Mar Kuriakose Kunnassery who is the senior most Catholic bishop in Kerala. I said Kerala because I know all the Catholic bishops serving in Kerala, more than three dozens of them in three different rites of the Catholic Church namely Syro Malabar, Syro Malankara and the Latin.

The Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Knanites is Abraham Mar Clemis, who is the senior most of all the bishops in India. He will be celebrating the golden jubilee of his episcopal consecration during 2000 - 2001 A.D. The Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox, H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Zaka 1st has been invited to come to Kerala in 2000 A.D. to inaugurate this episcopal golden jubilee which is a rare event in any Church in the world.

In our church there are only two prelates in this century who have completed more than 50 years of service to the Church.

1. Mar Yosip Khananishu Metropolitan of saintly memory completed 62 years. He was consecrated an episcopa by his paternal uncle Mar Isaac Khananisho in 1914 A.D. He died on 6 July 1977.

2. H.H. Mar Eshai Shimun, Catholicos Patriarch. He was consecrated Bishop and later Patriarch in 1920 and he resigned in 1973, after serving 53 years as a prelate. He was murdered on 6 November 1975.

The next prelate who has the longest service in our Church is the present Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV who was consecrated an episcopa in February 1962 in Tehran. We have to wait till 2012 A.D. to celebrate an episcopal golden jubilee of any prelate in our Church. The next one in line will be Bishop Mar Yosip Sargis, more than five years later in the end of 2017 A.D.

That should be the end of such long innings, if the decision of the Sydney Synod of 1994 is going to be taken seriously. No prelate will celebrate episcopal golden jubilee in active service. No more bishops will be consecrated before completing 30 years of age, as in the case of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun (12 years), Mar Yosip Sargis (17 years) Mar Yosip Khananisho (21 years) and Patriarch Mar Dinkha (26½ years when bishop).

Among other prelates of our Church at present we have three consecrated at the age of 28. Mar Narsai and Mar Aprem of India (present writer) in 1968 and Mar Meelis Zaia in 1984. All three will have only 47 years of service when they complete 75 years of age.

All other prelates were 30 or above when they were consecrated. The two priests who are scheduled to be consecrated in October 1999 are 37 years (Rev. Aprem) and 40 years (Rev. Khamis)

In the old calendar group we have two prelates. H.H. Mar Adhai II was consecrated as bishop and a Metropolitan when he

was 22 on 22 September 1968 in Bagdad. (I was his co-consecrator). Mar Timotheus Shallitha Metropolitan of Germany was also not older than 22 when he was consecrated by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, the late Mar Yakob III of Damascus. But the other two senior Metropolitans had completed this age. Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Kirkuk had completed 30 years of age when I ordained him priest and Mar Thoma Geevarghese Metropolitan had completed the same age when Poulouse Mar Poulouse Episcopa ordained him priest, both in 1968 in Bagdad.

Mar Thoma Priest

Rev. Kurien Thomas of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Kerala is a friend of mine. He is a priest in San Jose area now and doing his doctorate in Berkeley. He came with his wife and daughter for a dinner in the house of Joy Mulakan in Newark. (California, not New Jersey) This Newark is near Fremont. (The third letter 'e' is a elongated one in pronunciation.)

As I had not taken with me the diary which had the telephone number of Joy Mulakan, I telephoned to many people all over USA. Finally John Thermadam who was his classmate in school in Trichur, informed me from New York the telephone number of Joy. But it too didn't work. Sun Micro Systems in Silicon Valley was contacted. My joy was short-lived when I realised Mr. Joy who was listed in their list was an another Mr. Joy.

Finally we traced him and I had the joy of dining with Joy, Saje and their son. Their daughter was away in college. I had mentioned in a previous book about his invention and the patent he had obtained for MULAKAN ROTARY ENGINE. So far he could not put his invention at production.

David Mannukadan is the cousin of Fr. M.I. David. David is a computer programmer and arrived in the USA only two years ago. I was meeting him for the first time. I went and prayed in his home at noon, although the children were away in school.

The Mar Thoma priest requested me to inform him early about my next visit. Because he wanted me to preach during his Qurbana in my mother tongue, Malayalam. Many Keralites of different Churches attend his Qurbana because there is no Qurbana of other Kerala Churches in that area.

Anju, daughter of Abraham and Maggie Chammanam, was married few months earlier in Kerala and she accompanied her husband Sony to California where he is a computer engineer. Anju's cousin Mattachan Nadakavukaran had married my brother Windsor's daughter Sindhu. So I decided to visit Anju during this visit to California.

Dr. Davy Emmatty's mother Eliakutty is the first cousin of Anju's father Abraham. Therefore Davy invited Anju & Sony to dine in his house so that they could meet me too. But Anju had a better plan. "Why not the bishop visit their home and spend a night there?" In spite of the paucity of time at my disposal I decided to squeeze in that programme also.

It was nice to spend a day with them. Actually Anju along with her brother Jais (not Jesus) and younger sister were my admirers in Trichur. They are readers of my books. To tell the truth many of my Church members in Trichur do not know that I am a writer of books.

The night before I left California, Furat Babilla came with his computer. It was a laptop Toshiba with Windows 95 installed. Although there was no CD ROM or multi media, it was going to

be useful to me.

Some essential accessories had been bought by him such as battery charger, modem etc. Since the electric supply in India is 220 volts instead of 110 volts used in America, he had bought a convertor that can work for 110-240 volts. He had extra plugs for different countries. The plug pin for Asia will not work for Africa or Europe. We need a different type of pin for America.

Mr. Furat Babilla was very busy. Still he showed me how to use this lap top computer. He asked me to run the Norton antivirus diskettes once a month.

“Furat means Euphrates, the river that runs near Bagdad in Iraq”, explained Mr. Babilla to clear my doubts about his name. I was not familiar with such a name among the Assyrians. I have seen Euphrates river when I went to Iraq five times 1962, 1968, 1977, 1984 and 1990.

I could sense Christian fellowship and spirit eventhough we talked hurriedly. Although everybody accuses me (and rightly so) that I am too fast in my speech, I found that Furat Babilla was also a bird of the same feather. He told me that he had attended inter-denominational prayer meetings with other Assyrians. The need of the hour is that we should work and pray with each other. This planet will be a better place if we do so.

On 29th October Dr. Kiran Kuruvilla and his mother Sara drove me to the San Francisco airport from their home in Fremont. Before we left Kiran's father Zacharia Kuruvilla had already left for his work in the United Airlines.

He was a Wing Commander in the Indian Air Force. But he retired from service following a bypass surgery to correct

his heart problem. Such shocks usually persuade people to lead a quiet retired life cursing their fate. But Zacharia Kuruvilla went to America and brought all his three children there namely Dr. Kiran, Archana and Rahul.

Zacharia's father was a judge in Kerala and after his retirement he too was very active in his legal profession till his death. I believe in hard work. I know that God does not like lazy people. Many of our Indian people are lazy. Some of them learn to work hard when they find employment in America or in the Gulf countries. We can solve the poverty problem in India, if we all work harder.

Looking at his watch Dr. Kiran said that we had plenty of time to reach the airport at San Francisco. So he wanted to show me the San Mateo bridge which commands a beautiful view. Unfortunately there was some repair or some thing going on and the traffic began to slow down. I began to panic and pray to get our movement accelerated over the bridge. One cannot turn back and look for an alternate route once one is already in the line. There were thousands of cars before us and the same number or more behind us.

I was almost sure that I was going to miss my flight to the New York's JFK international airport. If I missed this flight, there were other flights to New York via Chicago or other routes. But the problem was that If I missed this direct flight to New York I would not get my connecting flight to London's Heathrow.

Kuwait Airways does not have daily flights to London from New York. To catch Kuwait Airlines, I prayed, "God, I will be a good boy next time. Please help me this time." I was aware that I have prayed like this before. Still I have dashed only at the last

minute to the airport or the railway station. I know that the Lord knows that I will forget my promise if God helps in this trip. I prayed again pleading with God "You know, that I was ready in time today. The only mistake we did today was to take this route over the bridge thinking that there was plenty of time left for enjoying the beautiful view of the harbour."

Domestic flights require reporting at the counter half an hour before the scheduled departure of the aircraft. My half an hour deadline expired. I had about 25 minutes only when our car reached the airport.

With a heavy heart I dashed to the counter for check-in. They leisurely looked into their computer and said, "Your booking has been cancelled." That is a new problem. I said, "No. I did not cancel. I only telephoned to re-confirm my flight 72 hours prior as required." They said somebody had telephoned to cancel my booking.

I became speechless. When there are only a few minutes for the departure of my flight there was no time to argue or clarify or to request for a new booking. Dr. Kiran's mother who had some experience of working with travel agency in New Delhi and in California asked, "Do you have a vacant seat in this flight?" They said, "yes." Then please accept this ticket. They gave me boarding card instantly.

If I had argued with them about the cancellation of my booking, the flight would have left. I do not know who cancelled my booking. Now I am not keen to know it. Because what I wanted desperately was to get into that aircraft with or without booking and to catch my connection at JFK, New York. The statement they made about the cancellation of my booking would

remain a mystery. They were not joking. Was it a computer virus? I do not know. I cannot think of any reason for anybody to cancel my booking.

Concluding Remarks

'The most admired men' in America according to the Gallop Poll taken on Dec. 28 and 29, 1998 are the following. The number one is, of course, *Bill Clinton*. He is on the top of the world for the sixth straight year. Actually his popularity has grown. In 1997 he had only 14% support while in Dec. 98 it grew to 18%. Now in 1999 his popularity may increase further as the impeachment motion has failed.

I do not know what is the reaction of the readers of this book. Will they support the result of his Gallop Poll? The only consolation is the fact that the second and the third place in this survey has gone to two Christian leaders who are really admired by the world at large. They are:

2. Pope John Paul II
3. Billy Graham, evangelist

The fact that the American public put Clinton above these two saintly persons speaks volumes about the values they cherish. It is unfair to judge all Americans on this issue, as it is the opinion only of those who participated in the Gallop Poll survey.

Smoking

The general trend in America is against smoking. Although the Kuwait Airways in which I travelled permitted smoking in designated areas, the Airlines owned by Americans are prohibiting smoking in the aircraft. Even in the airports the

smokers have a special area for smoking. The idea is to offer safety to other passengers who are non-smokers who form the majority. I guess that the habit of smoking will gradually disappear in public places in America. Nevertheless the new item in *TIME* magazine dated December 21, 1998, P. 66 discouraging people like me who expect the habit of smoking which is injurious to health to disappear from the face of the earth.

“Bad News on Smoking

ARE AMERICAN COLLEGE KIDS GOING up in smoke? An alarming report shows that smoking on US campuses has shot up 28% since 1993. The habit is more widespread among whites than blacks or Asians and more prevalent at less academically competitive schools. But the older, the wiser; seniors are less likely than freshmen to indulge.”

Sermons, Jokes

I had opportunities to preach in New York, Chicago, California, London etc during the holy Qurbana conducted in the Assyrian Churches. Although I said Mass in old Syriac (Aramaic) and read the gospel lesson in modern Assyrian, I could not preach in these languages. Therefore I preached in English. This year I did not use any interpreter. My namesake Bishop Mar Aprim offered to interpret for me in Chicago, I preferred to waive the interpretation as I suspected it would block the flow of my thoughts if I waited for the interpretation of each sentence to finish.

Moreover, I was not sure whether my jokes would lose the punch if they were translated into any language other than the

original. I wish I could preach like what Rev. Thomas G. Long wrote about the late George Buttrick (*Christian Century*) dated December, 1998, P. 1153.

“We both marvel over the way Buttrick’s sermons crackle with intellectual energy and humour, bristle with insights from the Bible, theology and literature, and engage the urgent intellectual issues of the day.”

Although jokes are not appreciated by some devout worshippers, it is effective in waking up some sleeping worshippers. No wonder William Willimon, Professor of Duke University, was named ‘one of the twelve most effective preachers in the English-speaking world.’ He is one the best humorous preachers of today.

Some Assyrians told me their regional jokes. My next joke book may use them. It is not for me to judge whether the Assyrians crack more jokes than the Polish and the Irish.

ENGLAND

On Friday, the 30th October 1998 I reached Heathrow in London. My sister's daughter Dr. Sheena George MBBS, F.R.C. Ophth had duty in hospital that morning. So her husband Dr. Simon Abraham M.Sc., Ph.D. came to meet me. Archdeacon Yonan Yonan and Fr. Esthapanose Turkhan came to the airport and suggested taking me to a hotel. But Dr. Simon insisted upon my staying with them in Tooting. Their marriage too had been solemnised by me in Trichur some months earlier.

The next day, Sheena and Simon drove me to Windsor Castle. There were a lot of people there being a Saturday. We had to park our car at a distance and walk to the castle. I noticed that the entrance fee to the Windsor Castle was £ 9.75. But those who completed 60 years could get a rebate of £ 1½. I said to my niece that I should have postponed my visit to 1½ years in order to qualify for this concession.

There was a lot of history around the chapel and the castle. Many royal people are buried there. Sheena had known the Chaplain at Windsor Castle as he was the Rector in Rugby. But there was no time to enquire about him or to meet him. We quickly walked through the Windsor Castle. On Saturday evening Simon and I went to the Indian Orthodox Syrian Church, a parish of 120 Indian families in U.K., which worship at St. Andrew-by-the Wardrobe, Queen Victoria Street, London since 1979. It was the memorial day of St. Gregorius of Perumala, the only Indian saint canonised by the Orthodox Church. They observe the memory of this saint usually on November 1.

The priest of the parish welcomed me especially because St. Gregorius was born on June 15 and I was born on June 13. The years of birth are 1848 and 1940. He found one more similarity between us - Saint Gregorius was made bishop in Dec. 10, 1876 when he was between 28¼ and 28½ years of age. I too was made bishop at that same age. I wanted to add to the list of similarities - both of us had the same baptism name, Geevarghese or George. He died on November 2, 1902 aged 54.

Metropolitan Dr. Kallistos Ware of Diakoleia, a professor at Oxford, was the Chief Guest of the evening. He spoke on the topic "who are the saints in the Church." Geevarghese Mar Kurilos of the Orthodox Church in Bombay was the chairman. I inaugurated the function by lighting the candle.

On Sunday 1 November 1998 I celebrated holy Qurbana at St. Mary's Church at Hanwell near Ealing. It was a pleasure to meet many old friends whom I used to meet since 1961. Some of those old friends like Rabbi Aprim Kellaitha and his wife Hanna (sister of late Mar Yosip Khananisho), Mr. Victor E. Wales etc had passed away.

My sister Sushila (wife of Dr. N.V. George) had come from Rugby with her grand daughter Christina. She looked me up at the altar. As I was at prayer facing east, the little girl began complaining that she couldn't see Jesus. My 3-year-old grand niece thinks that I am Jesus, as I have familiar bearded face associated with Jesus Christ.

My nephew Verghese and his wife Frankleen also attended Qurbana. That afternoon I went to Rugby to stay in my sister's house where I had been several times before. Rugby is about 1½ hours distant from London. I thought I would stay in Rugby

with 3rd grand nephew baby George. The first grand nephew is in New Zealand and the second Jos in Aleppey, India. The two grand nieces are Briana Amitya in Indianapolis, U.S.A. and Christina in Plano near Dallas, Texas. I got my 4th grand nephew in San Diego, California in May 99 and my 3rd grand niece in Tooting, London in June 99. A telephone call came from London. It was my friend Dr. Andrew Palmer who had arranged for me to play sitar for my 55th birthday on 13 June 95 in the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London.

Dr. Andrew Palmer is a Syriac scholar and he invited me to be a guest in his Syriac class and the liturgy class the next day. Had I known it a few hours early I would have stayed in London itself. Anyhow I decided to make a trip to London just for the classes.

Since it was raining my sister gave me an umbrella. As I had no habit of carrying an umbrella with me for the past many years I dropped it when I reached Euston station in my hurry to catch the train back to Rugby. In London railway station people do not walk, they run to make it to the train. When I realised that I had no umbrella in my hand I walked back to look for it. It had disappeared. I do not know whether anybody grabbed it from my hand or someone picked it up when I dropped it. I was feeling guilty when I told my sister that I had lost her umbrella. But she said, "Don't feel sorry. My children often lose their umbrellas." And she has five children and it must have been a frequent happening in that home in Rugby.

Dr. Roopa & Roshen are in Bromley. Dr. Roshen (George) who did his M.R.C.P. in London is working in Bromley hospital.

Dr. Roopa is not working now as she is taking care of their son baby George.

Dr. P.P. Kurian, father of Dr. Roopa Kurian invited me to Blackburn. I was happy to spend one day with him in his home. Dr. Kurian closed his Kelachandra Hospital in Chingavanam near Kottayam, Kerala and is working in a hospital in Blackburn. He is close to my age and being a new entrant in England is preparing for the exam for Diploma in geriatrics.

Dr. Kurian and family drove me to Blackpool, some miles distant from Blackburn. I know my cousin Dr. Tony Panangat lives in Blackpool. But he does not have a telephone. Till recently he was working in a hospital in Blackpool and he would say that anybody who wanted to contact him could contact him at the hospital. Having a telephone at home is sometimes a nuisance. Dr. Tony does not have children. In some homes children, especially if they are teenagers, use the telephone more than grown ups. Since Dr. Tony was retired I could not contact him. We had not much time at Blackpool except to walk around to see the beautiful illumination in Blackpool. It is miles and miles of beautiful illumination. As it was already the beginning of November the tourist season was almost over. Still the illumination was on. I do not know how the organisers could afford such expense.

JETWINGS magazine 'for the well-informed traveller' of March 1999 has an article about an Indian Summer suggesting that Cricket World Cup 99 is just the excuse for Indians to visit England in May and June 99. On the section on Manchester it was written "Don't miss this opportunity to go to Britain's most popular seaside resort of Blackpool."

Other attractions of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Nottingham are also mentioned in this article. Some useful tips for travellers are provided in this article. One can travel unlimited coach travel for \$100 for five days with the Explorer pass.

Such passes are profitable only if we have no work or meeting on those days. In 1983 when I went to the Oriental Canon Law Conference in Germany I purchased a EURAIL pass. But I did not take advantage of it as I was busy attending the conference. Hence there was not much time left to make use of the EURAIL pass except a trip to STOCKHOLM in Sweden. More information is on www.aero.visitbritain.com

Dr. P.P. Kurian took me to the Anglican Church where he attends for worship. The priest in charge is a canon. He told me that he is the first black canon in that area. I queried, "Do you spell the word canon with one 'n' or two?" If it is two 'n' it means cannon, the big guns, used in warfare to shoot at your enemies like Bofors' guns. If it is one 'n', then it is a priest in a high rank or the canon law of the Church. Many people make such mistakes. That is the reason why I go to such lengths describing it.

The Chaplain of the hospital where Dr. Kurian works also came to see me. He dropped in for ten minutes between his two visits in the morning. But as I began to answer his questions and clear his doubts about our Church and the Council of Ephesus of 431 A.D. it took about an hour. Then he had to rush to his place of duty.

Dr. Joe Philips from Kerala is a retired doctor and is a member of the Orthodox Church. He used to contact me whenever I went to Rugby. But this time he came to meet me in Blackburn.

THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue (MCTD) is the name of the committee appointed by the Secretariat for Christian Unity, Vatican and the Assyrian Church. It came into force as a result of the Common Christological Declaration signed by H.H. Pope John Paul II and H.H. Mar Khanania Dinkha IV of Chicago at a ceremony held in Vatican on 11 November 1994.

The first meeting of this committee was held in Rome in November 1995. The second was in Adma near Beirut in 1996 and the 3rd in Rome in 1997. So the England meeting was the 4th sitting of this Dialogue.

The Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue is an official consultation between these two churches. It is not like the unofficial consultation of Pro Oriente studies which are more of a scientific and academic nature and has no binding either on the Catholic church or on the Assyrian Church.

Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria & Europe was the head of the Assyrian delegation for the first three annual gatherings. But I was asked to head this delegation this time as Mar Narsai Metropolitan requested to be relieved from this post owing to many other responsibilities.

Although I was not a member, a paper on sacraments of our church prepared by me was read in the second committee which was held in Adma, Lebanon in 1996. I was present as a member, in the third committee that was held in the Casa

International de Clero in Rome in 1997. Therefore I was not a total stranger to the proceedings of this Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue.

Msgr. P. Duprey from Vatican is the co-chairman and was very courteous to me, one much younger to him. Having worked in the Secretariat for Christian Unity for many years it is impossible to find a person as well versed in ecumenical affairs as Bishop Duprey. I had met Msgr. Duprey earlier when I went to his office in May 1985.

Compared to the strong six member delegation of the Catholic side, our delegation of five members was no match. In theological and academic competence also we were not of a higher level, not even equal. But we discussed without any inferiority complex. Our two priests Fr. William Yakob and Fr. Geevarghese K. Thoma had come armed with books on Catholic theology and could quote from them. Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan (I jokingly speak of him as why why why?) being well versed in our theological books and practices was quite helpful.

Bishop Bawai Soro is our convener. He is an expert in this field. He is secretary of Inter Church Relations of our Church. Moreover his doctoral studies in Rome in recent years has equipped him for this difficult task. Even before going over to Rome to study he had studied for Masters degree at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C.

I am glad that our Bishops are now engaged in academic pursuits. It is like a two edged sword. It helps the bishop to learn more about our Church and about other churches which he has to come across in his episcopal duties. Secondly, these studies relieve him at least temporarily from the unnecessary

pressures of the diocesan administration. When I make this remark, the readers should know that it is the experience of a Metropolitan who wrote a doctoral dissertation and now writing a second dissertation for a Ph.D. in Syriac studies in the secular university in Kottayam, India known as the Mahatma Gandhi University.

Focolare Centre for Unity

The 4th annual session of the Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue met in Focolare Centre for Unity, in Hertfordshire, near London. Actually it was started in Italy by a young lady named Chiara Lubich when she was only 23.

The amazing life story of this Italian lady is a challenge to other ladies in the Church, some of whom do not turn a finger to remedy it except blaming the “male dominated Church” for suppressing women’s rights in the Church. She obtained many awards, the latest is the prestigious human rights prize by the 40-nation Council of Europe, given in October 1998. Chiara Lubich, aged 78, the founder of the Focolare movement, shares the council’s seventh human rights prize with two watchdogs on human rights abuses by police and judicial authorities. These are Northern Ireland’s Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HAFT).

The award was presented to Lubich, the first woman to win the prize, on 22 September ’98 at the Council of Europe’s headquarters in Strasbourg, France.

Focolare (Italian for ‘hearth’, as the movement tries to radiate warmth) was established in 1943 in the northern Italian

town of Trento when it came under intense bombardment. Lubich and a number of her friends visited the parts of Trento most heavily affected by the war, bringing food, clothing and medicine to the needy.

Since then it has grown into a world-wide movement, with local branches in 182 countries and two million supporters. Although closely connected to the Roman Catholic Church, it has attracted followers from all the main religions.

In her acceptance speech, Lubich pointed out that 1998 was the 50th anniversary of the signing of the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Her movement was committed, she said, "not so much in proclaiming human rights, but in helping the greatest possible number of men and women to live a lifestyle that has, as a logical consequence, love and respect for the human person and for his or her rights". She singled out the death penalty for particular criticism, arguing that it was not an acceptable measure for protecting society against crime.

Chiara Lubich received the famous Templeton Prize in 1977. The Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Robert Runcie gave her The Cross of St. Augustine of Canterbury in 1981. Focolare movement has Anglicans also in this ecumenical and international movement.

The fact that Pope John Paul II visited Focolare Centre in Rome on 19 August 1984 shows its acceptance in the Catholic Church. Not only Protestant, but Orthodox Church members also co-operate with this ecumenical movement, although Chiara Lubich is a Roman Catholic.

The Focolare Centre for Unity near London was an apt

place for the theological dialogue between the Assyrian and the Roman Catholic Church. The day we finished our dialogue was the beginning of a meeting of Methodist Church. Such Centres provide an ecumenical setting for various Churches to work together.

On Thursday 5th November 98 along with Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan, Fr. William Yakob and Fr. George Thoma I went from Ealing, London to Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire about an hour's distance from London, England.

Bishop Bawai Soro now living in Rome came later after we had arrived. Archdeacon Yonan Yonan was the only new member. Metropolitan Mar Narsai of Lebanon and Mar Meelis of Australia are no more in this committee.

Catholic delegation had six members. Archbishop P. Duprey, Archbishop Boustros of Melchite Church in Lebanon, Bishop Anton Audo of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Msgr. Farhad Jammo, Vicar General of the U.S.A., Fr. Mathew Vellanickal, Vicar General of Chenganacherry archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church, and Fr. Johan Bonny from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Bishop Anton Audo

Bishop Audo was known to me since 1996 when I met him in his home in Aleppo, Syria after the Pro Oriente Committee. Then in October 1997 I met him again during the 3rd Catholic-Assyrian Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue. I felt more at home for the historical reason that his grandfather's uncle, Patriarch Mar Joseph Audo VI had sent two Metropolitans to

Trichur, Mar Thoma Rokos (1861-1862) and Mar Johannan El Mellus (1874-82). My grandfather's father must have seen at least Elia Mellus in Trichur. Bishop Audo told me that he ordained a priest named Malek Mellus, from the family of Elia Mellus, and Patriarch Audo consecrated Bishop Mellus. Bishop Audo told me that Bishop Mellus who returned from Trichur in 1882 died later as the Chaldean bishop of Mardin in Turkey.

Msgr. Sarhad Jammo is another active member of the dialogue committee. He is the Vicar General of the Chaldean Church in the U.S.A. He is also a professor at Oriental Institute in Rome. He has taught prominent clergyman of the Syrian Malabar Church of India. He is committed to the cause of preserving the eastern elements of the Chaldean Church although it is under Rome since 1552 A.D.

Archbishop Cyril Selim Boustros was another prominent member of the Catholic Committee. This bearded bishop is the Archbishop of Baalbeck of the Greek Catholics. Baalbeck is a city in Lebanon where he resides.

Archbishop Boustros was a professor of theology for several years. His experience in theological teaching was an added advantage for participating in our dialogue.

The discussion in England about the sacraments did not reach a final statement in the finished form. It was decided to circulate the statements based on the discussions and to present the final form in the October 1999 session in Venice, Italy. Therefore, no detailed discussion of that dialogue committee is made in this travelogue.

Nevertheless, a footnote from the preparatory paper on the Sacramental Life presented there will be helpful to the

ordinary readers to have some historical knowledge of the theological development of our Church. I have changed the spellings of the proper names such as ABDEUS with Abdisho for the Assyrian people to understand easily.

The Church of the East has meditated, studied and faithfully transmitted her sacramental heritage throughout the ages. For the first period, i.e. from the founding period till the Arabian invasions, her main liturgical source are the homilies of NARSAI (5th century). For the intermediary period (from the Arabian invasion till the end of the first millennium) the writings of ABRAHAM BAR LIPHEH of 7th century, the ANONYMOUS (9th or 10th century) and Isho bar Nun (+ 828) have a special importance. About the year 1000 was compiled an anthology on liturgical questions, later attributed to GEORGES OF ARBALES (+960). Among the most important sacramental writings from the later period are the explication of all the divine sacraments by YOHANAN BAR ZO'BI (13th c.), the book of the seven columns of the Church by TIMOTHEUS II (patriarch from 1318 - 1332), and the liturgical commentaries of Abdisho (+ 1318), inserted in his 'Book of pearls'. The Church of the East sacramental tradition is rather a particular one. In the first period of her existence, the Syrian Church of the East, founded about the year 100 in the region of Edessa, lead a rather isolated and independent existence. This independence was mainly caused by the political opposition between the Roman and Persian Empires. After the persecution period however, from the beginning of the 5th century, the Church in the 'east' entered in contact with the Church in the 'west',

especially with the patriarchate of Antioch. Doctrinal divergences, accomplished at the Council of Ephesus progressively prevented the Church of the East to align itself on western theological teachings and liturgical practices. The Church of the East developed a particular sacramental tradition, based on its specific theological heritage and expressed in its proper liturgical practices. This particular tradition has to be considered in its own coherence and completeness.”

In an excellent paper read by Bishop Mar Bawai the Assyrian perspective in regard to the papal pronouncement regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary was presented. Bishop Mar Bawai Soro observed:

“When Popes Pius IX and Pius XII pronounced the two new Marian dogmas the 1854 and 1950, respectively, what was implied, at least from the perspective of the Orthodox and Protestant Churches, was not only a development of a dogma concerning the Blessed Virgin, but the affirmation of a developed ecclesiology of papal primacy as well. As a result, one may reasonably assume that if disagreement should be prolonged, even after a dialogue has achieved satisfactory results, the real reason for the prolonged separation may not be related to Mariology so much as to differing conceptions of ecclesiology.”

Since this book is a travelogue and not a theological treatise, I do not delve deep into that topic. Moreover, we have to wait till Oct. 99 for the next sitting of this Dialogue Committee to throw more light on this debatable topic.

On Sunday November 8 we had an Assyrian Qurbana

St. Mary's Church at Hanwell near Ealing in London. Bishop Bawai Soro celebrated the holy liturgy of Apostles, Adhai and Mari. Bishop P. Duprey and Fr. Johan Bonny from Vatican were on the altar with vestments along with Bishop Anton Audo of the Chaldean Church.

Msgr. Sarhad Jammo, Vicar General of Chaldean Church in America was also there. The priest of the Chaldean congregation in London was there with his parishioners.

Msgr. Mathew Vellanickal, Vicar General of the Syro-Malabar Church in Chengannacherry archdiocese in Kerala, India was there in the congregation. The small Church was full of worshippers and many had to stand outside.

At the time of distributing the holy body and blood of our Christ Bishop Bawai Soro, the celebrant requested Bishop Anton Audo to do it on his behalf. He obliged in the true ecumenical spirit and special relationship of the Chaldean-Assyrian co-operation was manifested, which began in 1996 at Detroit and August 1997 in Chicago and in 1998 in Beirut.

After Qurbana in Hanwell all of us went to the Assyrian Hall in Ealing where we had a breakfast reception in honour of this Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue. It was an occasion to explain our Assyrian congregation in London about the attempts of ecumenical unity.

It is very important that ordinary lay people should be involved and informed about what a few experts are discussing at such meetings. Of course it is impossible to get all lay people to participate in theological discussions. But it is necessary to take them too into confidence and solicit their prayers in the difficult task a few experts are asked to do.

On Sunday, after Qurbana and breakfast it was decided that we should visit the Westminster Cathedral and meet a Roman Catholic Cardinal. Some of us did not know the difference between the Westminster Abbey and the Westminster Cathedral. Our bus took us in front of the Westminster Abbey which is in front of the British Parliament House.

Westminster Cathedral was the Church of the Cardinals of the Roman Catholics. When we went in, we noticed an announcement that 'Pickpockets co-operate.' When we drew the attention of the Catholic priest who was taking us around, this strange notification, he told us that 'pick pockets' referred to 'the priests.' This is a cautionary warning to believers inside the Cathedral. Actually some laymen do not like the way some priests ask for money from the believers for the many projects going on in the name of charity.

One statement inside the Cathedral was that it takes £100,000 for the up-keep of this Cathedral for every hour or so. Heating is an expensive item in large Cathedrals.

Roman Catholics had no prominent place in England at the time of the Reformation. But about 100 years ago the Catholics got the freedom to build a Cathedral not far from the British Parliament.

Bishop Meddlycott, the first Vicar Apostolic of the Syro-Malabar people, went from Trichur to London as assistant Bishop of Westminster in 1896.

Being late by several minutes (about half an hour) we were not in a mood to examine every historical information regarding the inception of statues, crosses etc.

There are huge stained glass windows and icons in

cathedral. Since the Sunday evening service was in progress, we were asked to keep silence. I listened to the sermon from the pulpit. I must state that it was good, and relevant to the realities around. His homily was, 'Integrity is the name of the game.'

Cardinal Basil Hume was waiting for us when we reached the cathedral. When the other priests addressed him 'Father', we thought that he was an ordinary priest. There was no distinguishing mark or purple hat on his head. He was a cheerful person.

In May 1999 I read that he was diagnosed as having cancer. In June Queen Elizabeth II announced that Cardinal Hume was included in the list of 24 dignitaries who would receive the Order of Merit, the highest distinction the British monarch confers personally on others, since 1902 A.D. begun by King Edward II.

The Cardinal had mentioned to us that he had completed 75 years of age and like other bishops and archbishops he too had tendered his resignation and his retirement may come into effect not before long. As Cardinal he will be entitled to vote at the election of the Pope until he completes 80 years of age. Later I was sad to hear that his days were numbered as he was diagnosed to have cancer.

It was three years ago the famous Cardinal of Chicago, Bernardin was diagnosed of cancer. His funeral in Chicago was the biggest accorded to a civilian.

Another religious luminary to be afflicted with cancer was Dr. Poulouse Mar Gregorius, Metropolitan of Delhi (Orthodox Syrian Church) who died on 24 November 1996 following a heart attack. But before that he was diagnosed having blood cancer with no hope. But he never gave up hope. He wrote, "God gave me this precious life and I must use every minute of it to my last

breath, for His glory.” Yes, he did it. He was one of the most brilliant bishops anywhere in the world. He was known to all the world.

Poulose Mar Gregorius and I got Doctor of Theology degree at the same convocation of the Serampore University held at Kottayam in February 1977. Being older than me he had already established his name as an orator and author. He wrote many scholarly books and I trailed behind as a mediocre writer of jokes and travelogues. Will I ever attempt a *magnum opus*?

The sad news of the death of Cardinal Hume was announced on 18 June 1999. He died at the age of 76, of cancer.

A recent victim of cancer is His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of Echmiadzin of the Armenian Church. It was during a visit to the Armenian Churches in America, that Catholicos Karekin was diagnosed as having cancer. After treatment from June to August 98, His Holiness underwent surgery in September. He was convalescing in America till March 1999.

The visit of Pope John Paul II to Armenia scheduled for July 2 to 4, 1999 was postponed abruptly owing to the illness of Catholicos Karekin I. The Catholicos Karekin I died on 29 June 1999, aged 67.

COMPUTER

Assyrian Word Processor

During my stay in London Rev. Esthapanose Turkan, vicar of our St. Marys parish in Hanwell and Ealing near London, got a new Assyrian Word Processor named Milta (which means word). It is very useful to me as some letters (types) which Mar Narsai Press used for printing Hudra in 1960-62 are missing. We were not able to find experts who could cast new types from our fonts because the alignment of the letters are from right to left.

Without letters now we can type it on this computer. My fingers will not be soiled by the black ink which are invariably present on the types in the letter press system. The printing will be costlier than the letter press because the matter composed on the computer can be printed by the offset machine and not by the old type letter press machine.

Mr. Milton Daniel, of Croydon, England developed this Word Processor. He is the voluntary pastor of the Iranian Christian Fellowship in England. This is a complete Assyrian Word Processor. Milton Daniel claims it to be "the world's first Assyrian complete Word Processor." He writes with thrill.

"I always had a question in my mind as to why we should always be under other programme support? Then the idea to have an Assyrian word processor came with my ministry when I was among Assyrians who are in the Republic of

Armenia, Russia and others who are not familiar with the Arabic language, and also some Assyrians in USA or Europe may not want to change their system with another language even though English is the basic language for computer.

Mr. S. Gholami who encouraged me a lot to have an Assyrian Word Processor for the first time in the world, spent a lot of his time on this project and the result is absolutely stunning. The beauty of Milta is that not only can it write Assyrian language from right to left with its own TTF, it can also write from left to right if needed with its sister programme EditSia, enabling you to mix both styles of writing.

You can copy text from the Milta and export it to any windows based application as a text and paste it there and utilise it according to your requirements.”

I am not sure whether his first name Milton is from the Assyrian word *Milta* which means word, or from the famous English poet Milton. A jocular Health Minister of India (1977-79) Raj Narayan was not an educated man. When he visited London, the reporters asked him whether he had read the poems of Milton. Pat came the reply, ‘I have read not only Milton but also Hilton.’ The honourable minister must have read that name in front of the hotel which he saw while coming from the airport.

I did not apply spell check when I typed Milton’s name for an e-mail message to him. Because the computer may change Milton into Milton. When I gave the command for spell check ‘Bishop Aprim became Bishop April and Dr. Kiran became Dr. Koran.

When my friend wanted to purchase a Milta to suit

Windows 3.1, I got the following reply back.

Thank you for your E-mail.

The Assyrian Word Processor has been programmed for Win 95-98 & NT. This is because we thought that win 3.1 or 3.11 are old enough to use and also these windows do not have such ability for design work. I am sorry for this, but at the mean time if your friend wants to update his computer to Win 95 or later, then he can send his order with Win 3.1. Of course you should have an Arabic or Parsi Win 3.1, which those fonts can be loaded otherwise you can not write Assyrian. To get Assyrian fonts for Win 3.1 ask Rev. Stephen in England whom he knows the address of that programme. The beauty of Milta is, it does not need the Arabic support.

Please pray for us as we are thinking to have a very independent Assyrian Word with spell check. But this will take time, but it is possible.

In addition to the normal key layout of this font, there are three more key layouts.

2nd key layout Shift button

3rd key layout Ctrl button

4th key layout Ctrl & Shift

Some of these fonts are beautiful. The programme developer of Milta, Mr. S. Gholami M.Sc. deserves our congratulations.

Some months later in April 1999 when I visited Chicago for the Holy Synod, Deacon Laurence Namato installed *Gama*

Universe programme for Syriac, Arabic, Estrangela etc. I have a suspicion that the Americans do not know about the *milta* programme for Assyrians in England. I believe both *milta* of England and *Gama Universe* of America are very useful to computer users who need to use Syriac or Assyrian languages.

Since I got windows 95 laptop (Toshiba) computer I began to read all news about Microsoft and its owner, Bill Gates, the richest man in the world. More than nine out of ten of the Personal Computers in the world are running on the package made by Microsoft.

Mircosoft is accused of using their market muscle to crush competition from other software companies. A review of the book. "The Microsoft File. The Secret Case against Bill Gates" by Wendy Goldman Rohm. The review published in Express Magazine of the *Indian Express* dated December 6, 1998, P4 is not much favourable to Bill Gates, the billionaire businessmen who donates generously to many charitable causes.

I am not an expert in assessing the quality of the Windows 95. I am only a novice who attempts to learn the wonders of this machine. Therefore without making my observations, I give below two paragraphs from the above mentioned Book.

Review written by Nonita Karla

"Much of this software is sloppily written and ponderously slow. Worse, buyers are paying for something that isn't particularly innovative. For instance, Windows 95, launched in 1995 amid unparalleled hype, merely offers the same sort of usability and features that the Apple Macintosh operating system offered way back in 1987!

And many of Gate's critics include serious computer users who are more concerned with getting a job done efficiently than with having pretty pictures and twee icons light up their screens whenever they touch a mouse. Small wonder that they refer to his products as Microsoft Bloatware."

Microsoft, although a giant in computer business, took over another company named Hotmail. Compaq took over Digital, AOL (America Online, took over Mirabilis first, and recently Netscape.

Seedy RAM comments about these mergers in the *Indian Express* dated December 7, 1998, RAM writes:

Take-overs are prompted by market greed. Companies may talk a lot about integrating technologies, reinforcing core markets, or whatever phrases their spin doctors may come up with at that given moments, but the real reason that take-overs happen in corporations are usually fed up of making a quick buck. What they want to do is make a quicker buck!

Believe me, the guy who is paying for all this ultimately is the consumer. Which is why, a recent issue of PC Magazine wondered what it would be like if companies came together for no reason but that the consumer would like them to get together for reasons that will benefit, not tax him. A case of mergers no longer being driven by market forces, but by the markets (read consumers) themselves.

LINUX is another system that has challenged Windows of the Microsoft. The number of users of Linux is only seven million while Microsoft is 374 million. Apple Macintosh with 22 million users, has the second place. UNIX is in the 4th place with 6 million users. So LINUX has at least one million users more already.

The present position of LINUX can improve if many computer users read the article in TIME magazine dated October 26, 1998, P. 51 under the caption The Mighty Finn.

“Torvalds, like many self-made hacker heroes - and, for that matter, Bill Gates - was drawn to computers at an early age. He’s been programming since he was 10 (what else are you going to do in Finland if you hate ice hockey?), when Granddad brought home a commodore VIC-20 and recruited Linus to be his “right-hand man.” Linus immediately started using the VIC-20 to write his own computer games.

Linux was born when Torvalds bought his first PC and decided he didn’t like the operating system that came with it (Microsoft’s DOS) as much as the one that controlled the university’s mini computers (Unix). Since there wasn’t a version of Unix that ran on the PC, he set out to write his own. The next few months are a blur. “Forget about dating! Forget about hobbies! Forget about life!” he says, remembering that heady time. ‘We are talking about a guy who sat, ate and slept in front of the computer’.”

Linus Torvalds is a young man. He had phenomenal success so far. He does not anticipate that he can in the near future dethrone Microsoft Windows. Still he eyes on the top. Personally I do not want that happen suddenly. Because I want to continue my good feeling that I am the one of the 374 million users of the Windows. Let me now try to make the maximum use of the Windows 95 which is already in my hands.

Many are waiting to hear the outcome of anti trust case on Bill Gates of the Microsoft, now in the court of Judge Thomas P. Jackson. Some think that it is better to create two or three “Baby

Bills” similar to the Baby Bells created by the court-ordered break up of AT & T. The observation of TIME magazine dated 1 March 1999 is as follows. P. 43

Force Bill Gates to share his Windows with the world.

The option favoured by most State attorneys general would require Microsoft to divulge its Windows source code - its most valuable piece of intellectual property - to other tech firms. This would allow Microsoft’s rivals to develop their own versions of the world’s dominant computer operating system. The government could auction off the license to the highest bidders, or Judge Jackson could find Microsoft guilty of ‘copyright abuse’ – giving just about access to adapt and sell Windows.

Under this plan, Microsoft would get to stay in one piece and still profit from sales of ‘classic’ Windows. More competition might mean cheaper operating systems and, in the long run, cheaper PCs. On the minus side, however, “You would end up with an ever diverging standard that would have a dramatic impact on everyone whose business involves Windows”, says Jonathan Zuck of the Association for Competitive Technology.

Bill Gates of Microsoft is going to be the first trillionaire of the world. He is now the richest man in the world, but only a multi billionaire. It is expected that in 2004 A.D. he will become a trillionaire. His recent book *Business @ The Speed of Thought: Using a Digital Nervous System* tells of 12 Rules. The first is “Insist That Communication Flow Through E. mail.” He elaborates that point as follows: TIME, April 19, 1999 p. 46

FOR A LARGE COMPANY TO BE ABLE TO maneuver as

well as for better than a smaller competitor is a testament to both the energy of the employees and the use of digital systems. Personal initiative and responsibility are enhanced in an environment that fosters discussion. E-mail, a key component of our digital nervous system, does just that. It helps turn middle managers from information filleters into “doers.” There’s no doubt that e-mail flattens the hierarchical structure of an organization. It encourages people to speak up. It encourages managers to listen. That’s why, when customers ask what’s the first thing they can do to get more value out of their information systems and foster collaboration in their companies. I always answer, ‘E- mail.”

After reading the reader’s letters published a month later TIME, May 17, I have second thought on the admiration to E-mail culture. The following excerpt from Marie Skertic of Equador shows the other side of the story. P 3

I think he has forgotten that the vast majority of our world is not part of the digital age but rather lives very simply. And there are many citizens, such as I, who have actively chosen not to participate in it. We have decided to live in other, less-developed societies - places where such “old-fashioned” concepts as love, community, humanity, personalized service and neighbours helping neighbours have not been totally obliterated by impersonal machinery, the need for speed and efficiency, no matter what the personal cost. When all is said and done, computers continue to make life faster and faster and more and more impersonal, further isolating the individual from society.

As I began to learn the use of computers some of our Church members began to help. Timothy Sunny Mookan is the senior ICS Analyst at Philip Morris SVS Inc. in Dubai. This brilliant young man was willing to spend a part of his Xmas holidays with me, as his home is near to mine. Our grand parents were cousins, but now our people working in Gulf countries do not know each other as during the time of our grand parents.

Another young man who helped me is the son of my second cousin, O.S. Mirash. The maternal grandfather of his mother Alice and my paternal grandfather were brothers. Now some second cousins do not know each other. Modern life makes people indifferent to inter personal relationship. Mirash was given an award for bravery by the President of India. This young man belonging to the Rovers Scout jumped to action to save the lives of a family when his neighbour's house was bombed.

Mirash is a computer programmer in KILA, a government institution near 'Trichur'. His article on the role of computers in India will be very useful to my readers. Hence I quote the first and fifth paras of his paper. It is published in KURUKSHETRA, Vol. 47, No. 7, April 1999, New Delhi.

WE are living in an era of Revolution in Information Technology. Timely information is the basis of apt decision making in all fields of life. Computers have been introduced to serve this purpose. Electronic media like radio and television, modern equipments like telephone and fax etc. have reduced the distance between the countries and helped in the distribution of information promptly. Now a days, computers are widely used in communication purposes and it expelled the popularity

gained by the other electronic counterparts.

Internet

Internet emerged as a catalyst that helped the spurt in information technology. It can be termed as a gateway to the information super highway. Internet is a world wide network of computers. It is a combination of smaller networks and other connected machines spanning the entire globe. It was estimated that there are over 70 million Internet users in this global network. The number is growing at a rate of 100% per annum. It provides access to information, irrespective of one's status or nationality. Companies are using internet to conduct their daily business, communicate with and provide support to their customers, advertise their products and services in their own websites and look for valuable information to gain competitive advantage. Our country entered the information highway three years back. VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd.), is the Internet Service Provider (ISP) in India. By August 1998, VSNL has achieved a strong customer base of more than 1,50,000 customers in the short span of three years. For entering into this global information super highway or getting an internet connectivity, we only require a PC, a modem and a telephone connection. Now a days, even the middle class can afford to buy a computer. Approximate cost of a PC and modem will come to Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 60,000. The information that can be downloaded has no limits.

Christianity and Computer

As I started surfing through the internet, I found the

usefulness of my computer increasing. I was able to locate the website of our Church (Holy Apostolic Church of the East and the Assyrians under H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch.)

www.cired.org/cace.html

Just remember only cired.org. The word 'cired' stands for the council of interchurch relations, education, development.

In January 1999 a new website was inaugurated in Trichur.

www.christianityindia.com

The new Indian Express dated January 11, 1999, Kochi, P. 15 has the following, which tells us how a Roman Catholic diocese is making use of the computer.

Holy Orders Via the Web

Rhode Island: Catholic officials are looking for new priests in some unlikely places - MTV and cyberspace. Hoping to boost recruitment for the priesthood, the Roman Catholic diocese of Providence has begun running local advertisements on the cable music network and created a website (-www.catholicpriest.com). The Rev. Marcel Taillon recruiting co-ordinator for the diocese, came up with the ads after asking high school students how the church could reach teens. They said, "We do two things, father. We surf the net and we watch cable", Rev. Taillon said. AP

Yes, I looked it up and saw a Catholic priest presenting to youngsters the possibility of becoming priests in his diocese.

One can use the cyberspace for good or bad.

RETURN JOURNEY

On Monday 9th November when the Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue was over I went to visit Dr. Roop Kurian and her husband Dr. Roshen at Bromley. When I reached the Bromley railway station I had to telephone the family to pick me up. The coin-operated telephone at the railway station was out of order. The other telephone needed a telephone card and I did not have a card. How can I ask somebody for help? The passengers who get down at that station run to their cars and buses and rush to reach their homes.

When I saw an Indian family I approached them. The husband was in no mood to help me. But the wife suggested that her husband should give me his telephone card and I tried. But the line was busy. After a few minutes he said that they could not wait any more as their bus was about to leave. He suggested that there may be some coin-operated telephones in platform No. 2. So I returned his telephone card.

His son who looked 7 or 8 years old felt pity at my predicament. He asked me a very relevant question. "Do you know where the platform No. 2 is?" With a smile on my face and with gratitude for his concern for a stranger, I replied him "Yes. I came here from Platform No. 2."

I asked the policeman to help me. He replied that behind the out-of order coin-operated telephone there is another one facing the opposite direction. "Why don't you try there?" was his kind advice. I did. Dr. Roshen was on the line. Within a few

minutes, he came and picked me up. Their son "baby George" smiled at me and I made friendship with that baby. I remembered that his mother Dr. Roopa was only 2 or 3 years old when I first met them at Chingavanam near Kottayam along with her grandfather, the late Mr. C.T. Philip. That was when Streeter Stuart and Mrs. Stuart, parents of Twyla (who was a student for B.D. at Princeton when I was a candidate for Th.D. there) had come to visit Kerala, maybe in 1974.

After spending one day with the doctor couple and talking about my visit to Roopa's parents in Blackburn the previous week, I went to my niece Dr. Sheena to spend Tuesday night as I had left my checked-baggage and computer there.

Dr. Roopa and Dr. Roshen drove me to Dr. Sheena's apartment. Dr. Simon and Dr. Roshen had met earlier at the Orthodox Church in London.

On Wednesday Dr. Simon accompanied me to the house of Eshaya Chemmani in Ealing. Since Sheena had some meeting and Simon was not familiar with driving through the busy roads of London, Simon hired a taxi. Although I was prepared to go alone to Ealing, Simon insisted that he would accompany me to the house of Eshaya.

The taxi driver from Tooting informed that he did not know the roads in Ealing. He complained that he would be losing money by taking this long - distant trip which may give him only £ 20 as per meter. If he took five or six short trips during this one hour, his income would be much more than £ 20. He said that he came to our help because nobody else was willing to take such a long trip in the peak hours of 4 O'clock in the afternoon.

He kept talking and complaining and when we reached Ealing he said, 'Now you tell me the direction.' Dr. Simon replied, "Look at your map for the St. Stephens Road." The taximan replied that he did not bring his map. We argued that it was his duty to deliver us at the address given to him. If we were driving we would call our people and ask for direction. He suggested that he would drop us on some spot and ask our host to pick us up. We refused to do that as we felt that it was the duty of the taxi driver to deliver us at the destination. Finally with two or three telephone calls to our host he dropped us at the destination.

I was ashamed that although I had been to the house of Eshaya many times in my previous trips, I was not able to tell the name of the roads leading to St. Stephen's road.

On Thursday morning Anosh, brother of Mrs. Chemmanur, drove me to the airport. Since Ealing was close to Heathrow I decided to stay there. Otherwise my niece Dr. Sheena was willing to drive me from Tooting to Heathrow. But the London traffic in the mornings may result in missing my flight.

As I was going to fly by Kuwait airways, I was asking Anosh whether America would attack Iraq again as there were some threats.

By night my flight reached Kuwait. There was not much delay for the connection flight to Trivandrum.

On Friday 13th November I reached Trivandrum. I was hoping that the Customs authorities would not levy much customs duty on my secondhand lap top computer as it was a gift to me. I took one of my books with me to prove that I was a writer and it was an instrument of my craft. But the Customs

authorities in Trivandrum knew that I was primarily a bishop and not a writer. I do not have to make a living by writing books. Perhaps they knew that many people did not read my books.

As a bishop I should be a preacher not a writer. Fortunately they did not ask, "Bishop, why don't you stop writing and do something else, useful to your people?"

I did not take out my PRESS pass which was issued to me as a correspondent of SAR News used by several agencies including Vatican Radio. It does not have accreditation like other reporters of secular newspapers.

It was useless to argue with them. My vocation was not writing. Some of my well wishers had told me that I could pretend to be penniless so that they would let me go out on compassionate grounds without paying the Customs duty.

Foreseeing such an eventuality they asked, "Bishop, do you have cash with you to pay Rs. 8600? If you do not have don't worry. There is a doctor waiting for you outside. He has cash with him. You can go out and get cash from him."

"I have some dollars. I will change it here and pay Rs. 8600" was my reply. Religion is not a charitable institution in India. We are taxable. If I were carrying taxable items to an Orphanage or hospital or such registered charitable institutions, perhaps I could manage to get through without paying Customs duty.

I also decided to write more books and then to convince the customs officials that the computer is a tool of my craft for writing. I also pray before I get a better computer or such tool, that all governments in the world would adopt a policy of globalisation where there would be no Customs duty in any part of this planet earth.

SPEECH OF MAR APREM

(8 October 1998, Chicago)

On behalf of the Church of the East in India, on behalf of Mar Timotheus, Patriarchal Delegate to India and on my personal behalf, I greet your Holiness on the 22nd anniversary. I pray for God's blessings on Your Holiness.

Out of the 120 patriarchs, one hundred patriarchs did not reign for 22 years. H.H. Mar Dinkha IV is the 20th patriarch to complete 22 years. Now H.H. is on the list of the top twenty. In 15 years H.H. will be on the top ten list. Only nine patriarchs have served our Church for 37 years or more. After 15 years Your Holiness will be listed from the "top 20" list to the "top 10" list, occupying the 10th place.

Your Holiness had served 14 years and eight months as bishop in Tehran and so after 4 months Your Holiness would have completed 37 years as a prelate of the Church. In 2003 A.D. i.e. 4 years from now Your Holiness will have a combined service of 40 years as a prelate, thereby breaking the record of 4 patriarchs between 1700 and 1860 A.D. ending with Mar Abraham Shimun, uncle of Mar Rewil, uncle of Mar Benyamin and Mar Poulouse, uncles of Mar Eshai Shimun who resigned after a long service of 53 years, having completed 65 years of age.

One day before Your Holiness completed 22 years of patriarchate, Pope John Paul II completed 20 years of Pontificate.

becoming the longest reigning Pope of the 20th century, breaking the record of Pope Pius XII who had reigned for more than 19½ years.

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch will be remembered for the following four areas of activity.

1. Patriarch of Unity

The Indian Church which fought a legal battle for 33 years (1962- 1995) united in one spirit on 13 November 1995. I am a living example. This news of unity is a historic event. Many Churches do not understand how unity was achieved. Is it a magic or miracle? H.H. Mar Dinkha IV will go down in the history as the Patriarch of unity.

2. Patriarch of Ecumenical Dialogue

Dialogue with:

1. the Vatican
2. the Syriac speaking Churches under Pro-Oriente, Vienna
3. the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches
4. the Assyrian and Syrian Orthodox Church
5. the Assyrian and Coptic Church
6. the M.E.C.C. membership

3. Patriarch of Reconstruction

Just recently His Holiness dedicated Mar Zaya Church in Zahle, Lebanon and St. Mary's Church in Moscow, Russia.

Soon after H.H. settled down in his new responsibility he consecrated five prelates.

1. Metropolitan Mar Geevarghese Sliwa, Bagdad
2. Bishop Mar Bawai Soro, Rome
3. Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia, Australia
4. Bishop Mar Emanuel, Canada
5. Bishop Mar Odisho Oraham, Sweden

4. Patriarch of the 21st century

H.H. is engaged in preparing an educated clergy not only for the top leadership, but also in the ranks of priests and deacons. Similarly His Holiness has paid attention to the publication of books on the faith, translation of prayer books and historical works from *lishana athieqa* to *lishana Swadaya*.

His Holiness is encouraging schools for children to learn the language and history of our forefathers.

H.H. encourages musical choirs in the Church. A new book of our religious songs to be sung in the Church, by Rabbi Shoora Michalian, was published by His Holiness. These musical compositions will help several Churches to sing to the Lord with one voice whether in Chicago or in India.

Here is a patriarch concerned about the clergy, youth, children and women. The women are in our Church committees now. Although we do not have women priests, the Patriarch has encouraged *Rabbanyatha* (sisters) in Bagdad and India. May God Almighty strengthen His Holiness to encourage and equip this Church for the challenges of the 21st century.

Out of 120 patriarchs of the Church of the East, only 20 patriarchs completed 22 years of patriarchate. The following are their names:-

1.	Papa bar Gaggai	(247 - 320)	73 years	
		(or 64 years if he was consecrated in 256)		
2.	Elia Shimun XII	(1600 - 1653)	53	"
3.	Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII	(1920 - 1973)	53	"
4.	Rewil Shimun XX	(1860 - 1903)	43	"
5.	(Beth Sayada) Shimun VI	(1448 - 1490)	42	"
6.	Shleemon Shimun XVI	(1700 - 1740)	40	"
7.	Mikhail Shimun XVII	(1740 - 1780)	40	"
8.	Yonan Shimun XVIII	(1780 - 1820)	40	"
9.	Abraham Shimun XIX	(1820 - 1860)	40	"
10.	Yawalaha III (Bar Turkaye)	(1281 - 1318)	37	"
11.	Eshoyou Shimun XIII	(1653 - 1690)	37	"
12.	Elia Shimun VII	(1505 - 1538)	33	"
13.	(Bar Qakyume) Yawalaha II	(1191 - 1222)	31	"
14.	Savreesho V	(1226 - 1256)	30	"
15.	Dinkha II	(1329 - 1359)	30	"
16.	Ishoyav V from Beth Zodai	(1148 - 1175)	27	"
17.	Shimun V	(1420 - 1447)	27	"
18.	Shimun III	(1369 - 1392)	23	"
19.	Yawalaha Shimun X	(1558 - 1580)	22	"
20.	Khananya Dinkha IV	(1976 - 1998)	22	"

PATRIARCHAL ORATION

The speech which H.H. Mar Khanania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East and of the Assyrians, on the 22nd anniversary celebration of his Patriarchal consecration was a summary of the affairs of the Church universal.

By referring to the important events of the Church in Lebanon, Iran, and Moscow, the Patriarch was lecturing on the latest developments in the Church; internally as well as in the ecumenical field. Summarising such details here will help the future Church historians.

From July till August 8, 1998 Patriarch visited Iran and visited H.E. Mohammed Khatami, the President of Iran, H.E. Natic Noori, speaker of Parliament. H.E. Yazdee, the Supreme Justice of Iran, H.E. Taskheri, Director of inter relations between Muslims and Christians.

Urmiah province was blessed by the presence of the Patriarch for five days. His Holiness celebrated Qurbana in the ancient Marth Mariyam Church and ordained one deacon and four sub deacons (Heevpadyaqne).

On August 8 His Holiness flew from Tehran to London where H.H. celebrated Holy Qurbana.

On September 2nd Patriarch Mar Dinkha flew from London to Beirut. On September 3rd His Holiness visited President of Lebanese Republic H.E. Elias Harawi, a Maronite Christian.

On September 4th Maronite Patriarch His Holiness Mar Nasrollah Patros Safir received H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. On September 5 the Armenian Catholicos in Lebanon received H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. On the same day there was meeting with H.H. Patriarch Maximos V Hakeem of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. Mar George Saliba, archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Beirut called on our Patriarch at our Archbishopric of H.B. Mar Narsai de Baz where our Patriarch was residing during his visit to Beirut.

On September 6, Patriarch celebrated holy Qurbana at Mar Geevarghese Church. On September 8 Patriarch was interviewed at 'Al Noor' TV station owned by the Catholic Church.

On September 9, Patriarch met Sheikh Shamsed Din, the leader of Shiate Muslims in Lebanon. On the same day Patriarch made courtesy calls to prelates in the city of Zahle.

1. Bishop of Maronite Church
2. Bishop of Syrian Catholic Church
3. Archbishop of Melkite Greek Catholic Church
4. Leaders of the Presbyterian Church.

On September 10 Patriarch made courtesy calls to two prelates in Beirut.

1. Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church
2. Patriarch of the Syrian Catholic Church

On September 11 the following persons visited the Patriarch

1. Archdeacon Geevarghese Athniel from Hassake in Syria
2. Members of Central Committee of the Church in Syria
3. Mr. Zaia d Malik Ismayil of Syria

On September 12, Patriarch dedicated Mar Zaia Church

in Kasva, suburb of Zahle. On Sunday September 13 holy Qurbana was celebrated in the Church and he retired to St. Albair monastery in Beirut.

On September 14 and 15 Patriarchal Council met there with eight Prelates present.

On September 16 a joint Muslim-Christian committee met with our Patriarch to discuss unity of the people in Lebanon.

On September 17 the joint committee between the Assyrian Church and the Chaldean Catholic Church met. The joint declaration signed by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidawid on September 18 was published in many newspapers and magazines.

On September 17 itself after this meeting there was an audience with the Prime Minister of Lebanon Sheik Rafiq Al Hariri. Later all prelates had dinner at the Chaldean Archbishop's House. On September 18, all 17 conveners of the Assyrian-Chaldean dialogue went to the Presidential Palace to thank President Elias Al Harawi and his administration.

On September 19 Patriarch celebrated mass at the Church of Mar Khanania in Ashrafiya. On Sunday September 20 Patriarch celebrated Qurbana at Rabban Pithyon Church at Haddad.

On September 24 Patriarch flew from London to Moscow along with Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan and Mr. Fraidon Darmo. In Moscow our Patriarch was the guest of the Russian Patriarch Alexei II.

On September 25 Patriarch was received at the Archbishopric of Moscow by Metropolitan Juvenaly.

On Sunday September 27, 1998 Patriarch consecrated the newly built Marth Mariyam Church in Moscow. The following persons assisted at the service.

1. Mar Geevarghese Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq & Russia
2. Archdeacon Yonan Youvil Yonan, London
3. Qashisha Odisho Ishow, (grandson of late Qashisha Odisho of Sarsang, Iraq)
4. Qashisha Khamis, Moscow
5. Shamasho Samano

The Church is like the Mar Geevarghese Church in Daura, Iraq. The members of our Church in Moscow donated liberally towards the construction of the Marth Mariyam Church. The donations were from one thousand dollars to a hundred thousand dollars.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England and America, he specialised in Church History. He was the President of the Church History Association of India.

He holds two master's degree in Church History, one from the United Theological College, Bangalore (M. Th, of Serampore, 1966) and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (S.T.M. degree, 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (Th.D) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, U.S.A., when he was consecrated bishop in Bagdad, Iraq in 1968. Later he earned his D.Th. degree from Serampore University, near Calcutta.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961, he became a priest on the day he completed twenty five years of age on 13 June, 1965. He was consecrated Bishop on 21st September, 1968 and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later in Bagdad.

His biography appears in the International Who's Who of Intellectuals, Vol. 6, Cambridge, the International directory of distinguished leadership, first Edition, U.S.A. and others.

He was given 'Men of Achievement' Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1984, and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.

Since 1968, he is the Head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organisations all over India.



John (Walsan) Thermadam and his wife Shantamma with their two daughters (Janie & Jensey) and son Jensen.

Atlanta, Olympic Stadium.



Addison Mookan and his daughter Grace Marie



Memorial Brick in Honour
of the parents of Mar Aprem



Dade City, Florida. Mar Aprem with his elder sister Leela and her husband Prof. Dr.Alexander Alex. Extreme left is Susila, wife of Dr. Paul (Lonappan) Chackola.



Dr. Paul Chackola and wife Susila at Dade city.



In the house of Anju & Sona Kallarackal, California.



Dr. Kiran Kuruvila and his sister Archana in their house in Fremont, California.



Dr. Kiran's parents Wing Commander (Retd.) Zacharia Kuruvila and Sara

Rev. Kurian Thomas of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church
from Kerala, with his wife and daughter in California



Mar Aprem speaking at he 22nd Patriarchal
anniversary in Chicago 18 Oct. 1998





Breakfast after Qurbana at St. Mary's Church, Hanwell, London on 1 November 1998.

Left to Right. Dr. Sheena, Mrs. George, Varkey, Mar Aprem, Archdeacon Yonan & Fr. Esthapanose.



Baby George, son of Dr. Roopa and Dr. Roshan, Bromley.





Left to Right : Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan, Mar Aprem, Bishop P. Duprey (Vatican),
Bishop Bawai Soro.



At Patriarchal residence in Chicago on 18 Oct 98.

Deacon Lawrence Namato, Deacon Dhadway, Wilson, Freidon, Mrs. Christina
Mrs. Tina and other Assyrian friends.